

YOUNG CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY



JACK
COLLERTON'S
ENGINE

HOLLIS GODFREY





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Jack Collerton's Engine



“Hey, Bob!” cried Jack joyously, as the airship hovered overhead. — FRONTISPIECE

[See Page 234]

YOUNG CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY

Jack Collerton's Engine

By

Hollis Godfrey

Author of "The Man Who Ended War,"

"For the Norton Name," etc.

Illustrated

By H. Burgess



Boston

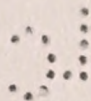
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TO MY SON

ALEXANDER HOLLIS GODFREY

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JACK COLLERTON'S ENGINE

CHAPTER ONE

JACK COLLERTON SAILS ON THE *Northumbria*

"HALF-PAST ten," said Jack Collerton to himself, as he looked up at the clock tower of the big station. "Half-past ten. Oceans of time. Father said he'd be there by eleven sure, and the boat does n't sail till twelve."

As his cab rattled on over rough cobblestones and slippery car tracks, Jack took in the New York water front with eager eyes. In and out of the low brown buildings of the railroad stations on his right poured rivers of men, women, and children. The departing crowd was soon lost in the passages which led to the ferry. The city-

bound masses dashed in sections across the road to avoid the onslaught of heavy drays, swung perilously near archaic horse-cars and accompanying cable-cars, or hovered on the brink of an increasing stream of cabs, most of which were proceeding in the same direction as himself.

The other side of the street was a queer mixture. Battered, unpainted, wooden structures stood next to modern brick warehouses, through the open doors of which the boy could see produce and manufactured goods; and here and there, mingled in without rhyme or reason, rose tenement houses of the poorer type. Over the whole poured the hot, bright sun, which now, increasing in its fervor, showed the whole busy, dirty, whirling city with intense clearness.

"So this is New York," thought Jack aloud. "This is the metropolis of the United States. Whew! How everything hustles!"

As Jack spoke, he saw the trunk-laden cab ahead turn sharply to the right, and glanced up quickly to see the sign "Cunard Steamship Company" just above him. An instant more and the cab was swallowed up in semi-darkness. A sudden cloud closed in over his eyes, accustomed to the glare of the street, but he could hear the sound of horses' feet echoing on wood, and he felt the cab slow up and stop. There was more light now, and his eyes, once more restored to usefulness, took in with eager interest the various scenes about this portal to the Old World. In a second Jack had turned the handle of the door and was out upon the dock.

"Hand those cases down carefully, please," he called to the cabman, who was busily engaged in unstrapping two good-sized leather cases, each secured with three locks, one placed on the front, and one on each side.

As he placed one case on the floor of the

dock, it gave forth a slight clang almost like the sound of a bell.

"What's thot?" exclaimed the cabman, starting. "I thought thot was baggage. Are ye taking bells across?"

"Oh, no!" said Jack smiling. "My father brought our baggage down this morning. That's a machine we are taking abroad. In one place it does n't quite fit its case, and when it strikes it sounds like that."

"Oh! Thot's the way of it, is it?" said the cabman, eying the cases with interest. "I niver thought of thot. Thank you, sir!" he went on, as Jack handed over his fare and tip. "The top of the mornin' to you and a good trip. I wisht I was goin' meself." He jumped on to the box and was off in a moment.

Shaking his head at a porter who had started to pick up the cases, Jack carefully placed his luggage in front of him and turned to survey the scene. The full bustle of departure was on. The great

black hull and white superstructure of the *Northumbria*, pierced with many open port-holes, showed through the broad doors directly before him, and, stretching down as far as Jack could see, door after door was blocked by the long side of the big steamship. Only through the great opening far down at the very end of the pier at his right, could Jack catch a glimpse of passing harbor vessels and the Jersey shore.

"What a monster!" said Jack to himself.

A slap on his shoulder roused the lad from his revery. He whirled on his heel to find an outstretched hand.

"George Powers!" he exclaimed, as he caught the hand and wrung it vigorously. "Where on earth did you spring from?"

"Right from little old New York, of course," answered George, with a grin. "Where else would you expect? I've been piling in letters to you with a New York postmark for two years, to which you reply about once in six months. And

now you come right here and never let me know anything about it! When did you arrive? What's up, anyway? Are you going across?"

"Got in at six. Sail at twelve," said Jack briefly and comprehensively. "Are you going, too?" he asked, with a sudden hope.

"Going too," growled George pessimistically. "I've saved only two hundred and fifty thousand in the last two years out of my eight dollars per in father's wool business, so I don't think I can afford to travel this season. I've got to get a new pair of tennis shoes this week, anyway, and I feel in my bones somehow that they'll queer it."

"Hard luck!" interrupted Jack, with a laugh. "I've always heard that New Yorkers were too busy making money to stop for any cause whatsoever. How I wish you were going, though!"

"Oh, never mind my woes," said George. "I'm just down here with a note from

father to one of his customers. But why don't you answer my question? How do you happen to be going?"

"Well, it's quite a story," answered Jack slowly. "But I'll start in on it anyway, and finish as much of it as I can before father comes. I'm expecting him every minute."

"Go it, old boy," said George, leaning up against a pillar. "I haven't got to get back to the office till after lunch, and I'll stay by you till eleven-thirty. Then I'll have to skip."

"To begin with, then," remarked Jack, "you remember father's engine?"

George nodded affirmatively. "You mean the one he was always working on evenings, in the little shop back of your house?"

"The same," said Jack. "Well, he's made it a go and done a big thing. That's the engine there." He pointed to the cases. "It's knocked down now, but it can be put together in two hours, and it only weighs,

cases and all, eighty-nine pounds. It's the most wonderful engine for use in airships that was ever invented!" As Jack spoke the words he felt a sudden qualm, and looked around swiftly. "I don't know but that I'm a fool to talk about the engine here, though, in a public place. I suppose I ought to keep it dark."

George laughed. "Well, you are from the depths of the backwoods all right. Why, Jack, do you suppose anybody here in New York cares anything about your engine? You're in a city, boy, a real city, not in a suburban town. Fire ahead. Don't be over suspicious. Come over here by these boxes if you're anxious. There's nobody there." The two moved slowly a little space away.

Jack had reddened a bit at George's banter. "I suppose you're right," he said. "I'm careless enough generally, anyway. It was only a sudden feeling. You see," he went on, "the whole thing has come to

a focus very suddenly at the end, though it really began about a year and a half ago, when father and I got in with one of the Aëro Club men,—Gardner, his name is.”

George broke in. “Gardner? Oh, I know who he is. He’s one of the biggest men in the game.”

Jack nodded. “That’s the man. He had an airship which got into all sorts of trouble because its engine was n’t powerful enough. Well, Gardner happened to hear of father’s engine, and came up to see him. We had a bigger model then, and we tried it on a big airship. It worked fine, and say, George,” Jack interrupted himself, “any old time you want to blow some of your extra wealth for an airship, just let me know. I’m an experienced pilot now. I could qualify easily for the French Aëro Club or any of the others. I’ve made forty ascensions, six of them at night. How’s that for high,” and he raised his hand with a lofty gesture.

"O. K.," replied George. "But don't take my mind off with trivialities like your balloon ascensions. Go on about the engine."

"All right," said Jack. "I don't mind humoring you. After father found that the big engine worked all right, he went to work to make a smaller one, and finally, just four days ago, he finished this. Now the Aëronautic Department of the British War Office announced a prize of twenty-five thousand pounds about a year ago for the best engine for use in an airship designed for a single operator. Gardner's been urging us to go in for it, and when the work was really done, father suddenly decided to go over and try for that. We've none too much money, and if father can win that prize it'll be a great thing for us."

"But what I don't see," broke in George, "is why you don't get a patent on the engine first."

"We've seen to that. We have applied,

and the application is registered, but you don't realize what it means to get a patent in this free country of ours. I tell you it's a lengthy job. One thing's sure, anyway. Our own government won't touch father's engine. Gardner made every effort to get them to do so, and only a week ago they finally and definitely refused. They have an aëroplane, you see, that they think is good enough. So that's why we go abroad."

"What's your rush?" inquired George. "Why this tearing hustle, when your father got the thing done only four days ago?"

"Why, it's this way," answered Jack. "The time limit of the competition is up in two weeks, and we couldn't reasonably expect to make it if we took any boat after this. We were lucky to get berths. We have two berths out of a three-berth room, but I don't believe that will make any very great difference."

"Any idea what your chances are?" went on George, interestedly.

"Pretty good," replied Jack. "There's one company we're sure to run up against, — The Mannheim Company. They're an English concern with an American office. They sold the War Office one of the engines they're using now. They haven't a very good name in the business. There've been some queer stories afloat about them."

"What sort of stories do you mean, Jack?"

"Oh, yarns of various kinds. Tricky deeds, most of them. There was a man named Hale, out in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, for example. He got up a corking good engine for an aëroplane and came East to get capital. Well, the Mannheims got hold of him and absorbed him so completely he lost all the rights to his engine, and hardly had carfare to go home. They're sharp, all right."

"Much of a firm?" said George.

"Pretty big," answered Jack. "There's not much doing in the aëronautic way world

over that they're not into, and that they're not trying to get hold of. That's one reason why we've kept father's invention so dark. They really are the limit."

"Well, I bank on you, anyway," said George, turning the subject. "Going farther than London?"

"I don't know yet," answered Jack. "We can tell better when we get over on the other side. We've had only the general notice of the competition, but we're required to submit a working engine, not a working model. That's why we have these with us." Jack patted the cases affectionately. "But I don't see what is keeping father. Here it is half-past eleven, and he's not in sight."

"Half-past eleven!" exclaimed George. "I must run. Wish I could see your father. Anyway, I hope you'll have the time of your life and come home with the twenty-five thousand pounds, a laurel wreath tipped sidewise on your brow, and the band, on

the upper deck, pounding out, 'See, the Conquering Hero Comes. Sound the Trumpets, Beat the Drums.' Good luck, old chap, and *bon voyage!*'"

George turned away, and Jack bent his attention once more to the coming crowd. Mr. Collerton was nowhere in sight. The lad looked at his watch again. It was twenty-five minutes of twelve.

"Time enough yet," he said to himself. "Father always had a habit of getting there at the last minute, but I wish he'd planned to meet me on the steamer instead of on the dock, if he's going to be late. I think I'll move up nearer the gang plank."

He had just started to pick up the cases and move forward, when he heard a sharp whisper behind him.

"Jack! Don't turn your head! Don't speak, but listen!"

It was George Powers' voice. In the swift, involuntary turn which Jack had made as he heard his name, he had seen

the pile of boxes directly behind him, piled higher than a man's head. In the instant that he stood there, his thoughts raced swiftly. He knew that George, full of fun as he was, had a cool, quick head, and was not given to dramatic action. Hardly moving his lips, Jack whistled the three low notes which in their old boys' club of early High School days had meant attention. The response from behind the boxes was immediate.

"Jack, I was a fool to tell you to talk as freely as you did. I think there's some funny business going on here. Look casually down to the third door on your left."

Jack turned on his heel as if to shift his position.

The words went on: "Now look at the man talking to that scowling thug of a cabman in the faded green coat; the man is dark, has a pointed, up-turned moustache, and is dressed in gray. If you've got them, raise your elbow an inch or two.

Look away, when you see them. I can watch them through the handle-holes of these boxes."

Jack's elbow rose.

George continued rapidly: "When I left you, I came square against the dark man behind these boxes. I'm morally sure he was listening to every word we said. He stared at me and I stared back at him. I thought at first I'd turn and come straight to you, and then I thought I'd watch him; so I went back out of sight behind a cab. As soon as I disappeared, he went over and began looking at the cabmen. He didn't say anything to any of them till he saw that tough. Then he began to talk to him. I came up behind these boxes, so he should n't know that I had warned you."

George broke off sharply. "The dark man is giving the cabman money now. He has his eye fixed on you, and I'm sure he's pointing you out to him. Hang on to your cases hard! You can't tell what's up,

but in any city of this size there's plenty of men who'll do anything for money. Now they've parted. Keep your eye on the cabman! The trouble is there, if any is coming. I'm going to see if I can find a cop I know, who's on duty here. He was on the beat by our place till a month ago, and he's a good friend of mine. I'd move down toward the gang plank with the cases, if I were you. You'll be all right as soon as your father gets here, and I'll be back in a few minutes. So long!"

Jack stood carelessly for a brief time, with his eye on the scowling cabman. Then he picked up his cases and started towards the gang plank. As he did so, he saw the cabman turn and walk out towards the street.

"False alarm," he said to himself. "George meant well, but I don't believe anything melodramatic is likely to happen. But I do wish father would come! Here it is twenty minutes of twelve, and he's not in sight."

By this time a perfect avalanche of

trunks, of bags and boxes, was pouring up two gangways on the left, and a steady procession of first cabin passengers was entering just ahead. Far down towards the bow, a stream of steerage passengers, faintly discernible behind the shifting masses between, showed brighter hues in the yellow turbans, gay hats, and kerchiefs of our newer citizens returning from their new home to the old. Aft of the baggage chute the second-class passengers were entering.

Jack had taken his station just at the end of the rope barrier which enclosed the space where two streams passed, the descending flood of visitors coming ashore on one side of the double aisled gangway, and the ascending torrent flowing in on the other. Never had Jack been in a busier place.

Near him, a gray-bearded officer in a gold-braided, natty white uniform was laughing and chatting with two girls just on the point of embarkation. Florists' boys were

rushing up with long pasteboard boxes of flowers. Late comers were crowding in, laden down with hand luggage. Passengers on the deck above were taking snapshots of people on the dock. People on the dock were taking snapshots of passengers on deck. Flowers were falling through the air. Boxes of candy were being thrown back and forth, sometimes reaching their destination, and sometimes falling to destruction in the black water beneath. Merry friends were parting with laughter. Sad families were parting with tears.

As he scanned the crowded decks, two faces just above the rail caught Jack's eyes. Evidently the two were mother and son; and motherless Jack felt a fulness in his throat as he watched the beautiful face of the woman. She stood beside an English boy of about his own age. Both had that northern fairness that has persisted in the south of Britain since Saxon Harold's day.

"I hope I shall get to know that chap," said Jack to himself.

Just then an ominous cry broke on his ears: "All ashore that are going ashore! All aboard that are coming aboard!"

Jack turned, in an agony of anxiety, to look once more for his father. He tried to think over his instructions still more carefully. Yes, he was doing exactly as he had been told. His father had directed him to wait on one side of the dock till half-past eleven, and then go up to the gang plank. Jack could hardly have helped seeing him if he had entered, yet his eyes never ceased their search.

Suddenly his roving eyes met an object that fixed their gaze. Almost beside him he saw a faded green coat. The peculiar yellow of that sleeve could not be mistaken, even though the face was turned away. Even at a distance Jack had already noted the peculiar garb of the cabman. All his worry over George's news came back re-

doubled. If somebody were going to make trouble for him now, could they have hurt his father first and kept him back? Never in his life had Jack been at such a crisis. With all his forces he struggled to keep his head cool for the emergency, as he clenched his hands around the handles to the cases.

Jack glanced at the open watch of a man beside him. It was five minutes of twelve now. He could hear gongs sounding loudly. The gang plank was nearly deserted, except by sailors. A few last shore goers were hastening down, though two or three men, apparently company officials, were still on deck, talking to an officer beside the opening. Now they said leisurely good-bys and started ashore. Four men ranged themselves ready to cast loose the lashings and run the gang plank back.

Jack's wandering eyes had turned to the gray-bearded officer deserted by his girl friends, and he noted the erect, white-clad

form bend as the officer listened to the words of a breathless, perspiring man, who had evidently had a hard time forcing his way through the crowds. In an instant the officer nodded, and Jack instinctively watched him as he raised his head.

"Mr. John Collerton!" he called, and after a moment more, "Mr. John Collerton!"

The first moment of amaze over, Jack leaped forward with his cases and stopped beside him. The breathless man thrust a packet into Jack's hands, and looking down he saw across the top, in his father's handwriting: "Go. P. C."

He knew the initials perfectly. They were his father's commands, and he did not hesitate to obey. Up the gang plank he started with a rush, only to be jerked suddenly back by a rough grasp on his arm. Clinging to the cases, he turned to confront the cabman.

"No, you don't sneak off to Europe without payin' me for the horse ye killed!"



“No, you don’t sneak off to Europe without payin’ me for the horse
ye killed!”

the man shouted hoarsely. "Here, orficer, orficer, take this man in charge! He killed a two-hundred-dollar horse for me."

Jack's wits worked quickly. "This is ridiculous!" he cried. "What can I do?" He turned to the officer, who stood watch in hand. Jack could see the minute-hand just pointing to the twelve on the dial.

"The ship can't wait, my boy," he said kindly. "If you've got two hundred dollars that you can leave, I'll settle things, and if it is n't right, I'll send it along to you by cable. But we can't wait." And he signalled to the four men, who bent phlegmatically to undo the lashings. The crowd was going wild. Most of them were shouting to the boy to break away, but the cabman had so firm a hold on one of the cases now that he knew he could not break it. Flight with eighty-nine pounds of luggage would be no easy thing.

The cabman was still shouting "Police,

Police!" when a blue cap appeared, forcing its way through the crowd. Jack could see that the last lashing was loose, as the officer came in sight and the cabman began volubly to explain. But the officer, unheeding the cabman's words, turned to some one behind him, and Jack, with a thrill of triumph, saw George's honest face.

"This is your friend?" said the officer briefly, to George.

"Yes," answered George.

"Leggo that case! I'll take you to the station to explain this!" said the officer sharply to the cabman, as he took the astonished man's arm with a practised grip. He turned to Jack.

"Go ahead, sir. That's all right."

With a tremendous dash, Jack sped up the gangway, amid the laughing cheers of the passengers and of the waiting throng, and stumbled aboard.

The officer raised his hand, the gang plank shot back, the men down on the

dock began swiftly to throw off the big mooring ropes, and Jack felt the throb of the screw. As he sank on his cases by the rail, he saw George executing a few steps of a war-dance as he waved good-by, and saw his friend start away in pursuit of a blue coat, accompanied by a faded green one, whose owner seemed engaged in an excited monologue. With a sense of relief, Jack saw the dark man following, some distance in the rear. The grim silence of the officer of the law boded little good to the man who had tried to keep Jack behind.

Now the puffing tugs hauled and pushed the great leviathan from her berth out to midstream. The tossing sea of faces which had emerged from the big door that led to the seaward end of the pier became a confused mass of indistinct black and white. The crowding harbor side, the green of the Battery, and the great turrets of the mighty city faded one by one, and still Jack sat on

his cases, gazing backward with an anxious heart. What had become of his father? What was the meaning of the strange incident at the dock? How could he meet the necessities of the competition?

CHAPTER TWO

AN ETON BOY APPEARS AND A PLEASANT VOYAGE IS MARRED

AS the *Northumbria* freed herself from the narrow barriers of the rivers and swept majestically down the bay, Jack Collerton roused himself with a heavy sigh, and started with the precious cases towards his stateroom. Meeting a white-jacketed steward, he surrendered his burden, and followed on down the wide staircase, through the great dining saloon, where the long tables were well filled with passengers at their first sea luncheon, and across a broad aisle. Just beyond the dining-room, the steward turned sharply to the right, entered a fair-sized cabin, and dropped the cases.

"Here you are, sir," he said. "There's another young gentleman, a Mr. Burne,

about your age, with you. And the other Mr. Collerton is your brother or father?"

"My father," answered Jack slowly, as a wave of desolation swept over him. "We were to have crossed together, but he's not coming."

"Really, sir," said the steward respectfully. He changed the subject. "There's my bell, sir, if you want anything. Luncheon will be served for an hour more, sir, and if you have any letters to send back by the pilot, it would be well to get them in the mail-bag soon after luncheon." He bowed and closed the latticed door, leaving the lad alone.

Jack threw himself on the long red couch beneath the port-hole, and gave himself over to a few moments of careful thought. In the first shock of his departure, the packet which the breathless messenger had handed to him had been forgotten, but now it came to his mind, and he eagerly drew it forth.

As Jack read the four letters, "Go. P. C.", written on the fat brown envelope which cased the bundle, he wondered again what intensity of need could have caused his father to send him off with no more explanation. He broke the seal and poured forth the contents of the envelope on the couch beside him. An oblong black leather case, two coin purses and two smaller envelopes appeared.

The black leather case Jack recognized at once, as he had the coin purses. Opening it, he drew forth from one of the pockets the letter of credit, a stiff, crinkly paper which set forth that two hundred pounds stood to the joint credit of his father and of himself, an amount which could be drawn by either. He opened the other pocket of the case, and drew forth a paper he had not seen before. This, too, was official. It was a power of attorney made out to him, giving him authority to sign documents of any type in place of his father.

It had been *viséd* by the British consul at New York.

"It almost seems as if father had feared that something was to happen to him, from all the precautions he took," murmured Jack. "But, really, I suppose that's hardly true. He was only guarding wisely against accident when he got these things ready."

A five-pound note, nestling beside the power of attorney, exhausted the possibilities of the black case, and Jack remembered his father's rule never to be without money when travelling. "That's the reserve fund," he said to himself.

He turned to the envelopes, one of which held his own passport and his father's. "We may need them for the competition, son," his father had said, when they applied for them together. The other envelope held a hundred dollars in Express Company notes, with the equivalent values in British, German, and French money given on the sides. The coin purses were the only thing

left now. They held five pounds in sovereigns, half-sovereigns, half-crowns, shillings, and sixpences.

"I've got some time yet before the pilot goes off," said Jack, looking at his watch. "I'll arrange all these valuables first. Then I can write father more definitely." He put his passports in his trunk, which was beneath the berth, locked the trunk, concentrated all his money and credits in the black case, and put that into his pocket, pulled a piece of paper and a stamped envelope from his bag, and began to write.

S.S. NORTHUMBRIA, Saturday.

Dear Father,—I don't know just where to send this letter, so I'm going to send it home, hoping it will be forwarded to you from there. I got the parcel all right and found all our baggage in the stateroom,—the trunk and the three bags. The engine is all right. I have \$1,150, the passports, and the power of attorney.

What in the world happened? I hope I

shall hear from you soon, and have this mystery cleared up. But in the meantime I shall go ahead and do my best.

Lovingly,

JACK.

Jack had addressed his letter and was just sealing it, when the door opened, and there entered the same blond English lad whom he had seen leaning over the rail.

"Hello!" said the incomer cordially. "You to be my berth mate? Saw your set-to with the cabman. It was rippin'. Jolly glad you won out. My name's Burne, Bob Burne. Suppose you're Collerton, either P. or J."

"I'm J.," said Jack, with his first smile for some hours. "John Collerton. My father is Philip Collerton. I was going over with him, but something has happened, — I don't know what, — and he's left behind."

"What rotten luck!" exclaimed Bob Burne sympathetically. "I'm jolly glad we're to

be berth mates, though. There's a vacant seat next to us at table, too. Don't you want to take it? My mother'd like to have you. She jolly well liked your looks, I don't mind tellin' you."

It was Jack's first experience of the clipped language of the English public-school boy, but under the somewhat brusque manner shone forth such a hearty cordiality that he was won at once.

"I'd be very glad to take the seat," he exclaimed. "I'm downright green about things, you see. It's my first crossing."

"Only my second," said Bob Burne cheerily. "But you get on to a lot of things first time over. We came over, mother and I, three months ago. If you're to post that letter, why not do it now, then get your seat and lunch."

Jack rose, with an anxious look at his cases. For a moment he was in a dilemma. Then as he looked at Bob's honest face, he felt that he could do nothing better than

ask him for advice. He stepped to the door and closed it.

"To tell the truth," he said in a low voice, "I'm afraid to leave those cases. There's an engine in there that I'm taking abroad, which must not get lost. Since my trouble on the dock, I feel a little uneasy."

Bob Burne looked at the cases gravely. "Two things I suppose you can do," he said slowly. "One's to take 'em and give 'em to the purser to keep for you. Other's, let 'em stay here. Either case, wouldn't worry about 'em. Too big, I fancy, to give to purser. He wouldn't have any safe place to put two such big cases as that. He wouldn't put 'em in the specie vault. That's sealed now till we get to the other side, and the things are too big to go in any safe. Matter of fact is that you're pretty safe to leave 'em here. They're too big to slip away easily. Too queer looking not to be recognized. Ship's different from on land. Stewards and stewardesses

round all the time, night and day. People leave everything big round, regardless. Think I should take my chances."

Jack laughed. "I suppose that is right," he said. "One can't go round lugging baggage all over the ship, or stay in the cabin all the time, watching it. I'll leave them here."

"Wisest move," said Bob laconically. "Come on."

The two boys found the mail-bag, posted Jack's letter, and returned in search of the chief dining-room steward. The chair beside Bob's seat was fortunately vacant, so Jack saw his name placed at that spot on the diagram, and then, suddenly realizing a large and energetic appetite, sat down to a hearty lunch, which was interspersed with occasional laconic sallies from Bob.

Jack was just ending, when his steward came towards him with an envelope. Jack read the printed words, "Marconi Wireless

Company," and the typewritten address beneath:

JOHN COLLERTON, ESQ.,
S. S. Northumbria.

With a sense of deep wonderment, he broke the seal and read:

Leg injured by automobile. Rapid recovery expected. Go ahead bravely.

COLLERTON.

The mist rolled back from Jack's pathway as he read. Trials might be ahead, troubles of various sorts, but the chief anxiety had departed. He knew his father's fate. Jack turned to Bob with a beaming face. "I've heard from father. Hurt by a motor-car, but recovering."

Bob stretched out his hand with a hearty grip. "Great!" he said. "So glad for you. Know how rotten it would be if something happened to mother. I've no father, you see."

"And I've no mother," said Jack.

"Come on up now, meet my mother, and get your deck chair," said Bob, after a moment's silence.

The two went up the stair through a corridor and out on to the deck, whose shadowing awnings made an aisle of shelter in a sea of golden light. Steadily and swiftly the great boat was ploughing her way outward. Ahead was the broad Atlantic. On the right, a comparatively short distance away, stretched a dune of sand, on which rose a lighthouse and a few huddled buildings.

"Sandy Hook," cried Bob. "Now we're really off."

Jack gazed backward for some minutes at the low land rapidly sinking from sight. That was one of the last ties of the old. Now for the great things of the new. As he stood gazing, Bob, who had left him, reappeared, accompanied by a blue-jacketed steward.

"Here's the deck steward," he said.

"Better get your chair now. Here's a place side of us." The man took Jack's name, wrote it on a tag, and fastened it to the chair. "Four shillings, thank you, sir," he said, and Jack paid his first bill in English money.

As the two boys stood beside the chairs, Bob suddenly broke away.

"There's mother," he said, and in a moment more returned with the tall, graceful lady whom Jack had seen before.

"My dear," said Bob courteously, "may I present my berth mate, Mr. Jack Collerton?"

"I am very glad to meet Mr. Collerton," said Bob's mother, with a smile that won Jack's heart immediately. "I am glad that my son has so good a berth mate."

"Mrs. Burne," said Jack, with a touch of the old-fashioned courtesy which was a part of the lad, "it is a privilege for me to meet you, and I am very glad your son and I came together."



“May I present my berth-mate, Mr. Jack Collerton?”

“By the way, Collerton,” said Bob, “I forgot to mention it, but mother’s Lady Angela Burne. Father was a birthday knight. Got his prefix for some bridges he built. So mother happens to be Lady Angela, while I’m plain Bob Burne, now of Henley and late of Eton.”

The voyage was well begun. Never were two boys more congenial than the two who were together. Never was pleasanter passage. Over a summer sea the liner sped on through the swift flying hours. Each day showed a record passage, and each afternoon, as Jack looked at the chart on which the run to noon was marked off, he saw the distance to the Old World much diminished, the line to the New World much greater. Shuffleboard in the morning, tramps around the deck in the afternoon, long, lazy hours in the deck chair, made the days pass in a calm security which did much to quiet Jack’s forebodings.

Two nights and three days had gone

since the time of sailing. The third night came still and warm. Jack and Bob spent the evening in the bow, looking forward over the broad, unchanging sea ahead, until a gradual cessation of their conversation showed the oncoming of a drowsiness which presently drove them cabinwards and to bed.

That night Jack, in his upper berth, fell into a deep sleep almost the moment his head touched the pillow. It was perhaps two hours afterwards when he awoke with that sudden throbbing return to consciousness which comes with the sensation of falling through miles upon miles of space. As he lay there, he felt oppressed by a sudden increase in the temperature, half rose to cast off the blanket, and thought for a fleeting instant that he saw a gray form just below him. Without a word he threw back the bedclothes and jumped to the floor.

To his surprise, there was no one there. Bob was sleeping peacefully in his lower

berth. The trunks and bags filled all the space beneath berth and couch. The cases which held the engine stood in the corner beside the double wash-stand. The little closet could not hold anything larger than a dwarf. Jack turned to examine the chain which fastened the latticed door. That seemed all right. He stood there in a complete quandary.

After a moment Jack turned to look at Bob by the dim light. Could he have been walking in his sleep? No. He lay perfectly peaceful and well tucked in. Jack turned to the closet and opened the door. Nothing appeared but the clothes hanging on the forms. He even let down the wash-stands, but there was nothing there that was out of the normal. At last he climbed back to his bunk. "It's no use talking," he said to himself, as he settled down again, "I must have dreamt this. What probably bothered me was my bath wrap hanging on the door." He pulled his watch from his

pajamas pocket. It was just one o'clock. "I believe I'll stay awake, though, for a while," he soliloquized, "and see if anything really does happen. I'm not going to disturb Bob's slumbers, though."

Settling himself comfortably on his side, Jack looked down on the little room beneath him. A feeling of unreality crept over him as he gazed. Could he be the same boy who had been reciting Virgil in the Latin class two weeks before? Somehow the outlines of the stateroom, as they appeared in the dim light, seemed theatric and artificial. The never ceasing pulsation of the propeller, the slight motion of the boat, regular as the beating of his own heart, began to be unreal, too. Gradually, Jack began to fall under the spell of sleep. The sound of the screw turned into the vibrations of an airship motor, and the lad was floating off into unconsciousness, when a slight creak in the passage outside roused him to full wakefulness once more. In an

instant he was up on his berth, ready to spring down; and then, thinking better of it, he sank back on his arm.

Above the regular noises of the boat came a new sound — the sound of metal pulling out of wood. It stopped, and then began again. For a third time the slight scrape was repeated.

Never had Jack's senses been so completely alert. There was not an inch of the stateroom that was not photographed on his brain, not a sound of the night which did not ring in his ears.

A fourth time the scrape began. It ended, and Jack saw the end of the chain moving from the place where it had been clamped to the wall. To his utter amazement, a block of wood about three inches square came out from the casing with the chain. Two fingers held the block as it moved. The hand let the block of wood, swinging at the end of the chain, drop noiselessly to its full length, the door swung slowly back, and a

dark figure with a black handkerchief over its face, entered. The visitor closed the door with the same care with which he had opened it, bent to look at Bob, then with a silent step mounted the trunk which projected from beneath the lower berth, to look at Jack.

From the moment the intruder had entered the room, Jack had made up his mind to know his business, and if possible to ascertain whether he was a common sneak thief after any valuables he might get, or whether he was on some other, some more mysterious, errand.

With a supreme effort of will, he lay back motionless, his eyes closed, his chest expanding and contracting with a slow regularity. The man, satisfied by his inspection, stepped down and turned away. Under the shadow of his arm, Jack opened his eyes. The thief had turned directly to the engine cases. He knelt on one knee beside them, and Jack heard a faint click

of metal as the man's hand went forward with a key. One lock turned, then another, and Jack felt the time had come. Silently he rose, and then jumped with all his force directly on the kneeling man. As he leaped he shouted:

"Bob, Bob, help!"

Down went the man at the sudden attack, up went his hands with the bunch of keys, and Jack grasped them as he struggled. Bob was beside him in an instant, and a fierce combat began between the man and the boys. Up and down the few square feet of the cabin floor they went, until the man, striking his head sharply, suddenly went limp all over and lay flat.

"We've laid him out," gasped Jack, breathless. "Tie his hands with the strap from my bag there."

As Bob turned to get the strap, Jack for a moment relaxed his vigilance. The next moment he found himself thrown as by a catapult against the couch, and saw the

presumably unconscious man in the doorway. The next moment he was flying down the corridor.

"He's gone!" cried Jack, and the two boys started after in full pursuit. As they entered the narrow aisle, they could see the gray figure at its end darting to the left. On they dashed. Now he turned to the right. Now to the left.

"Stop thief! Stop thief!" cried Bob, as the running form turned once more. A startled steward joined in the chase, and the clamor rose.

"Here he is!" cried Bob, and the three, the steward and the two boys, leaped at a form at the top of a dark staircase. All four fell in a heap through a door and into the dim light of the writing-room. A gleam of gold braid showed their mistake. They had seized one of the officers of the watch, who was just off duty.

It took some time for mutual explanations, time which was precious, for the

chance of catching their masked visitor was lost. But the explanations were finally made, and, none the worse for his tumble, the officer started back with the boys to their cabin. The ship was subsiding into calm as they passed. Lights were going out in the staterooms, and protruding heads retreated from the doors as the passing officer said a reassuring word.

Their own corridor was still dark and quiet when they reached it, and turned towards their cabin. As they entered the door, Jack turned the switch of the incandescent, saying: "I'd like to have you look at my cases first." The light sprung on, and the boys looked at the corner where the cases had rested since they arranged their baggage. It stared back at them blank and empty. The cases were gone.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TENDER AT QUEENSTOWN CARRIES SOME UNEXPECTED LUGGAGE

THE two boys and the officer stared blankly at the empty space. Then Bob's jaw came up with a snap.

"So that was what he was after, Jack! Perhaps I was wrong, after all."

"Never you mind, Bob. We did the best we could," said Jack bravely.

"There's little chance of a thief keeping anything sizable, anyway," said the officer. "There's a careful inspection every morning, and, big as the ship is, it's hard to hide things. Now tell me just what you lost, and how you lost it."

Jack told the whole story graphically, aided in some degree by Bob. He was just finishing when he stepped backward, and jumped

with a sudden "Ouch!" He stooped down and picked up a bunch of keys.

"Why, here are the keys with which he was unlocking the cases!" he cried. "Why, they're my keys," he went on, with a start of amazement. "But he had them in his hand when he came in!"

"Suppose he'd been in before?" asked Bob.

"That's what it is," said Jack. "He came in before, got my keys, and woke me when he did it," and he told them the story of his first wakening.

The officer was deeply interested. "Two things I don't understand," he said meditatively. "This business of the door, and why he tried to unlock the cases first, and then carried them away afterwards. The first thing is easily settled. Let's look at the door."

For the first time since he had entered the cabin, Jack looked at the door, expecting to see the square block of wood with

the iron clasp dangling at the end of the chain. To his amazement, the chain hung there alone. The block of wood with its clasp stood apparently as firmly connected with the wall as any other part of the casing.

"That's what I don't understand," said the officer. "Don't you suppose you left the chain unfastened?"

Jack made no reply. He was on his knees examining the wood. Suddenly he jumped up, took a pair of small scissors from a shelf, and went back.

Kneeling once more, he carefully scrutinized the wood of the casing just parallel with the bolt of the chain. The officer and Bob bent to look also. Jack touched lightly with the end of the nail scissors three tiny nail heads, and then inserted the thin blade of the nail scissors below the head of the topmost pin. The fastening gave easily, and an inch of slender wire appeared. Seizing it in his fingers, Jack pulled sharply. Out came inch after inch, until at last the

lad held out a nail six inches long, which looked as though it might have been fashioned from a woman's hat pin. Without a word of comment he returned to his task, and succeeded in extracting two similar nails.

As the last one came out, a block three inches square — the same block which Jack had seen before — slipped out from the apparently solid wood. Jack took it in his fingers, pulled it out, and turned to the eager spectators. A yawning cavity showed where the block had been removed.

"That's the way of it," he remarked simply.

"By Jove!" said the officer. "He must be a clever beggar, though. This is no amateur job. Now why did he try to unlock the cases?"

"You've got me there," remarked Jack meditatively. "I don't see why on earth he went for those cases, unless he thought they contained something different from

what they do. You see, they hold a knocked-down engine I'm taking across, — an engine that isn't of much use for anything but airships, anyway. No, there can't be anything special in it. It must be a sneak thief."

"Not by a long shot," said the officer decisively. "You've got to find some other reason back of this. No sneak thief ever fixed a door like that, when there are forty cabins wide open during the day that he could dodge in and out of. No, indeed, that's no common thief. The man who did that job was a man of brains."

"The way he did the trick was the neatest ever," said Jack. "Evidently when he escaped from us, he came straight back, and made up his mind the quickest thing to do was to take the cases whole. He took them, spent a minute in fixing the door, and escaped."

"By Jove!" said the officer again. "He certainly is a clever beggar. But he can't

get your cases off. Somebody must have seen him take them, unless his cabin is right on this corridor, and certainly there's no chance of his getting them for good, for we'll turn the ship upside down, if necessary. Now if you'll write me out a description of the cases and their contents, I'll report all this to the captain at once. While you're doing that, I'll get a carpenter here to put that door right, so nobody can do the same trick again." The officer started to leave and then paused. "I rather fancy," he remarked, "that neither of you had better say anything about this to any one. We stand a better chance that way."

By the time the door was fixed, Jack had written a full description of the cases and had turned it over, the gray dawn was entering the port-hole, and the night was past. Too excited to sleep, the boys dressed and went out on deck.

Never was more thorough search than

that carried on for the next two days on board the steamer *Northumbria*. It was the whole force of a magnificent organization controlled by law against the cunning of a single malefactor — and the malefactor won. Despite every effort, no trace of the cases could be found, and the officers at last were forced to put their trust either in the Queenstown or Liverpool customs, or else to rely on the overhauling of the boat afterwards. Deeper and deeper gloom settled over Jack and Bob. Bob felt little better about the matter than did Jack, for he could not but realize that his advice might have been the cause of the loss. The two boys, welded by the bond of sympathy, grew nearer and nearer together as the time went on.

The evening of the fifth day, while the two were talking quietly in their deck chairs, they heard a commotion forward. A man ran by, and the cry rose: "One of the Irish lights is just ahead!"

Leaping from their chairs, the boys sped forward. Just off the port bow a twinkling light, Great Britain's beacon, which stands as sentinel of this coast of the great island empire, was just discernible, flashing its welcome to the incoming ships.

The sight of that friendly ray was too much for Jack's composure. Wave after wave of "Channel fever," as the English sailor calls it, of intense desire for land, thrilled him through and through. A new restlessness kept him straining towards his goal, a restlessness which aggravated his intense anxiety about the precious cases.

That night neither of the boys caught more than a little troubled sleep. The boat was to reach Queenstown before dawn, and by one o'clock they were on deck, peering eagerly ahead. Now and then shoreward lights sprang from the velvety darkness, and the soft night breezes were redolent with the early summer odors of the land. The whole night seemed a part of some

splendid harmony in which the hopes of the lads insensibly rose high, despite their past misfortune.

"Seems as though we must find 'em at Queenstown or at Liverpool," said Bob meditatively, for the fortieth time.

"I don't see how we can help it," answered Jack once more. "The captain has stationed officers at every gangway. The customs have been notified, and every piece of baggage that goes off will be examined through and through. I wish we might have been in the search, but I suppose it's better the way the captain has arranged it. We couldn't do anywhere near as much as the officers can do."

Far ahead to starboard, a group of scattered lights began to cluster on the black horizon. "Queenstown," remarked Bob.

"Not much like the lights of a big city," said Jack critically.

"Oh! You really don't see much of Queenstown here," said Bob. "The city's

in back. We come only to the mouth of the harbor and the tender takes off the passengers. The old boat brings out fresh vegetables, too, so you'll have a taste of some of the green things of the Emerald Isle to-morrow morning."

The lights were growing stronger and more distinct now. The ship was waking. Departing passengers were hurrying to and from the dining saloon. Stewards were staggering under loads of wraps and handbags. Liverpool passengers who wished to watch the disembarkation were coming on deck in semi-dress, covered by long coats. All interest centred in one spot, where a boat's lights rose and fell on the quiet sea.

"There's the tender!" cried Bob, as the big liner slowed down, slowed still more, and then, with her own momentum, ran alongside the queer tub of a tender, which lay rising and falling in the trough of the sea.

The two boys had gained a position

from which they could look down directly on the broad, flat decks and the central pilot-house of the tender below. Hampers high-piled with produce, which overflowed their boundaries, filled the bow and showed darkly green against the light wood of the decks, the shades intensified by the combined effect of the yellow lights of the tender and the white lights of the liner.

"What do they do first?" asked Jack. "Take off the provisions, or take on the passengers?"

As he spoke, his question was answered. The moorings of the tender made fast, a gangway was rapidly raised from the lower deck, and a swift procession of stewards ran down the incline, seized the hampers, and bore them in a long procession upwards. Like magic, the last one disappeared.

A brief pause, and the first-class passengers strolled across and took their places on the upper deck. The second-class passengers, moving somewhat more briskly,

followed. Last of all came the steerage, a motley throng, pouring through in full tide.

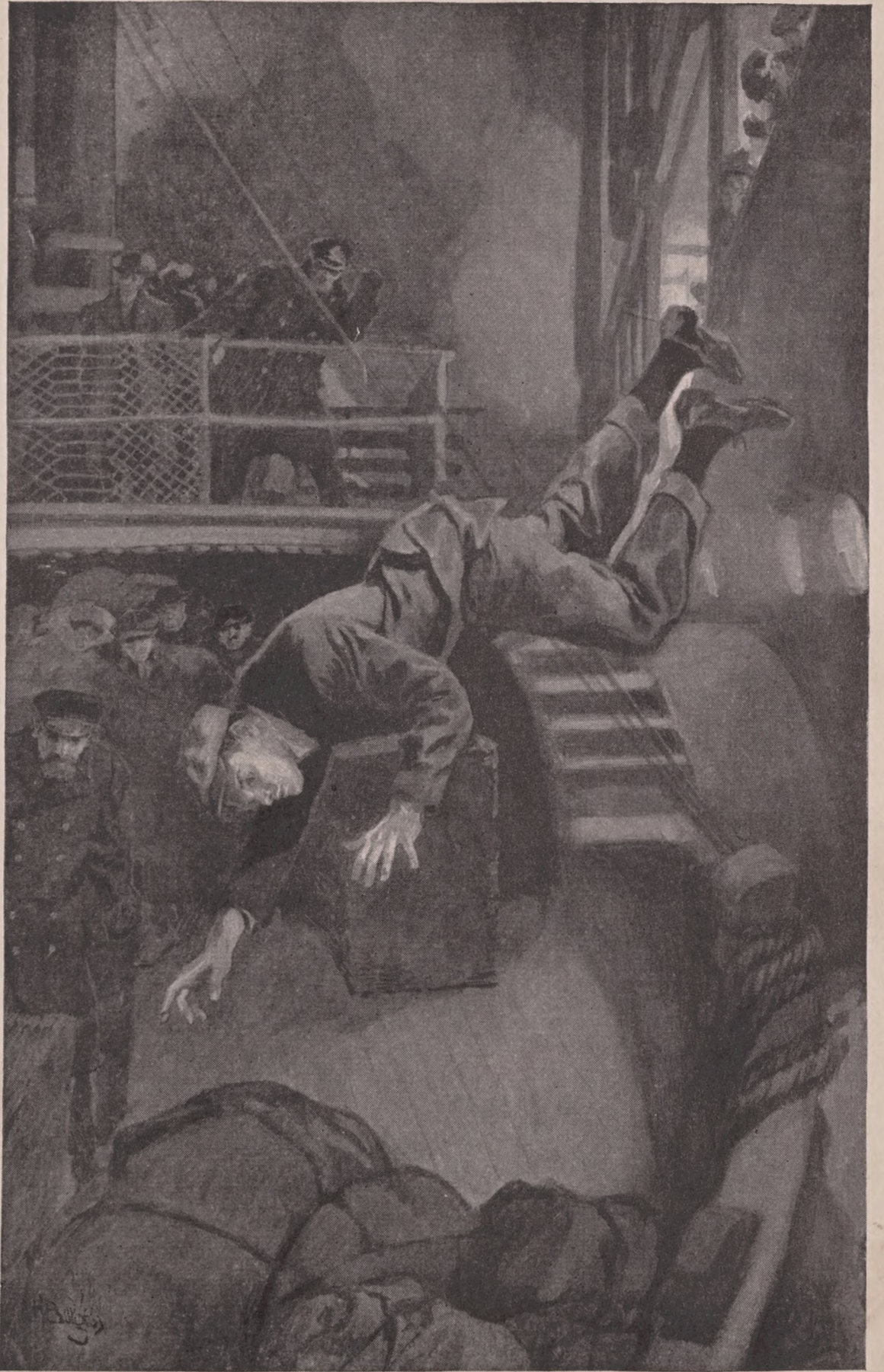
Some of these last were apparelled in American clothes, and seemed back for a vacation trip to the old home. Some of them were apparently dressed in the very rags in which they had left the old country, looking as if beaten back by the hurrying harshness of the new land to the quieter, easier waters of the land which gave them birth. Swift and slow, exultant and sad, they poured through the narrow aisle, their eyes bent on the lights of the dim shore ahead.

Jack stood watching the passing luggage with eager eyes. It was, of course, easily possible to take the engine from its cases and repack it in another form, yet so oddly shaped were many of the pieces, so perfectly contrived for their use the cases in which they were held, that it seemed as though their irregularities of form might

lead to detection, if any ordinary bag were used. Rough parcels were more likely to contain such parts, and with searching eyes Jack watched the bedding and the rolls of wraps which the steerage passengers were piling directly beneath him, some thirty feet below.

"There's a good show of his trying to get things off through the steerage," their friend Soamers, the officer whom they had assaulted, had told them that afternoon. "I'm going to keep a sharp lookout on the bedding, when I go ashore at Queenstown. I don't go up to Liverpool this voyage. I've got to go directly back on the *Cambria*. The captain has assigned me to look out for your engine especially."

Roll after roll of bedding was deposited beneath Jack's eyes. Bundle after bundle was added to the heap, till the last passenger had crossed the little bridge, and the officer below, looking up, met Jack's gaze with a shake of the head and an inquiring look.



He landed, sprawling, on a heap of bedding in the bow

Jack shook his head negatively in return. He had not obtained the slightest clew from the disembarkation.

As he stood staring downwards, waiting for the tender to cast off, a swift rush of stewards, bearing empty hampers, crossed. One by one, they piled the empty cases at one side, and returned as rapidly as they came. The gang plank fell back with a clatter to the deck; the pilot on the bridge of the little boat gave a hoarse command. That possibility seemed closed.

"See those hampers! They're heavy!" cried Bob suddenly. Two sailors, piling the hampers to one side, were lifting one of the wicker cases with some difficulty, a third was hastening towards them, and a rough altercation seemed rising. "Wot's in this blooming thing? It's 'eavy as lead!" came up to Jack's ears, as he watched the struggling men.

An instant of silence reigned as the attention of the multitude turned in that

direction. The heavy hamper at one side, becoming displaced, fell to the deck, and up through the stillness floated a bell-like sound from clanging metal. To Bob's amazement, he saw Jack rush from his place and disappear through the nearest door. For an instant he stood with open mouth, wondering. Then, by a sudden intuition, he leaned far over the steamer's side to see Jack mount the rail of the deck below and shoot out in a long graceful curve on to the tender, which lay some ten feet or so below.

He landed, sprawling, on a heap of bedding in the bow, and Bob, to his great delight, saw Jack pick himself up apparently unhurt from the thick pile, and scramble towards the hampers. The altercation had suddenly ceased; two sailors still stood with the hampers between them, but the third party to the struggle had disappeared.

As Jack climbed off the pile, he felt his collar seized by a rough hand, and realized

that he was being dragged unceremoniously forward by an angry petty officer.

“’Ere, ’ere, none of this! None of this!” his captor exploded. “Whatcher mean? Whatcher mean by this ’ere?”

With what little breath he had left, Jack called, “Mr. Soamers! Mr. Soamers!” and from the crowd beyond, his officer friend appeared.

“Those hampers—my engine! I heard the sound when it dropped!” he cried chokingly.

A wave of the hand, and Jack was free to seek the hampers, while, scarcely less eager than himself, Soamers leaped to his side. From the bridge far above a deep voice sounded forth: “Hold the tender there!” and a bell sounded in the stillness of the night.

The sides of the liner were crowded now with eager spectators. Windows were opening, stewards’ heads were peering through, sailors were hanging outside the rail, and a little group of officers, clustered at one

end of the bridge, were watching curiously the dim scene. Below on the tender, the departing passengers were massed in a black moving throng behind a few sailors engaged in keeping a space clear. Here the yellow gleam of a lantern showed a blue-clad officer and a gray-clad boy eagerly working at the wire fastenings of a couple of big wicker hampers. Jack was the first to cut his way through, and with a final snap and a sharp pull, the cover rose. With a low cry, Jack half disappeared from view, pulled out some table linen, flinging it behind him with a careless hand, and then — lifted forth one case. As his case reached the deck, Soamers brought the second case to view.

Up above, the tense stillness of the scene was broken by a wild "Hooray, hooray, hooray!" as Bob, in an ecstasy of delight, shouted forth his joy; and a lower sound of interested comment rose from the watching audience.

Scarce hearing or realizing the tumult above him, Jack had already unlocked one case with a practised hand. He threw the cover back and glanced within. All was as when he saw it last. He opened the other, and the same conditions met his view. Without a moment's delay, he snapped the locks and straightened up to meet Soamers's outstretched hand.

"Oh, Mr. Soamers, let me get out of this! Can I get back on board?"

"Shall Mr. Collerton come aboard now, sir?" called Soamers.

"Certainly," came the response. "Bring the tender alongside again, and, Mr. Soamers, look out for the man who was trying to stop the sailors from handling the hampers."

As the words left the captain's mouth, a splash came from the side of the boat, and a dozen voices called, "He's gone overboard!" He had. There was a short, fruitless search. A boat was lowered, and re-

turned without result. The accomplice had escaped. Nor did further investigation on board reveal more. The way the engine got into the hamper remained shrouded in mystery.

Again the great boat and the small touched sides. Again the gang plank rose, this time to receive two comers, as Jack and Soamers, bearing the cases, walked across. Soamers turned back and Jack disappeared towards his cabin. Once more the gang plank fell. Once more the tender cast loose and, in obedience to its twinkling bell, went on its way, as the gray dawn began to show vivid green fields bounded by whitewashed walls upon the cliffs.

The hurry of packing was over. The last good-bys to steamer friends had been said and the last congratulations had been received, when Jack, with the two cases beside him, stood on the deck of the steamer, as she rode proudly the next afternoon up

the broad Mersey. Every item of the engine was present when Jack and Bob had unpacked and repacked the cases in the early morning, and two satisfied boys stood side by side as they passed the crowded banks and saw the thronging traffic of this great ocean-gate of England. Birkenhead on the one bank of the Mersey, and Liverpool on the other, showed stretch after stretch of docks and wharves.

“Prince’s Stage ahead, mother,” cried Bob. “Doesn’t it seem good to be home again?”

“It certainly does, my son,” replied Lady Angela. “I hope, Jack,” she went on, turning to him, “that you may find this a home place, too, after all your anxious voyage. You will go right up to London with us, will you not?”

“I shall be very glad to do so, Lady Angela,” replied Jack warmly. “You don’t know how much I appreciate all you are doing for me.”

"I'm glad to have two boys instead of one," said Lady Angela, smiling.

As she spoke, a passer-by halted. "I saw a cablegram for you, Mr. Collerton, as I got my mail."

"I'll go," cried Bob. "Look out for the cases."

In a minute he was back with the cablegram. Jack tore it open swiftly and passed it to his friends.

Improving rapidly. Hope out soon.

COLLERTON.

"Rippin'!" exclaimed Bob. "Could n't have better news on arrivin'."

"I'm so very glad," said Lady Angela.

Slowly the tugs, with petulant snorts and sudden rushes, pushed and pulled the liner up to Prince's Stage. Without delay the moorings were caught and fastened. In a trice the gang plank ran up.

The scene of departure from New York had been a fascinating one to Jack's unac-

customed eyes. The scene of arrival at Liverpool was quite as attractive. The English "Bobbies," with their chin-strapped helmets, the frogged black coat of the police inspector, with his bamboo stick, the blouses of the porters, the slightly different dress of the men and women, all indicated the change in nations, even though the high buildings beyond the wharves and the elevated tracks piercing a cross street just ahead seemed little different.

The trunks and bags had cascaded down a chute, and the crowding rush to the shore had become a slow departure, when the three voyagers walked down the gang plank, through a corridor, and out on to a platform where a train of cars stood waiting. Large letters at the left proclaimed the place of waiting for the customs.

Simple enough the British customs were. A glance at his engines, a brief query concerning tobacco and spirits answered in the negative, a few chalk marks, and the in-

spection was done. Jack turned to see Bob beckoning to him from a window of the train.

"Get this porter to put your box and bags in the luggage-van, and come on in here," he called.

A porter came hurrying as Bob spoke, who seized Jack's things skilfully, carried them to the luggage-van and returned.

Bob was beside Jack now. "Give him a shillin'," said Bob, and Jack obeyed.

"Tuppence or thruppence is enough generally," remarked Bob, "but this landin' business is different."

"How about my check?" asked Jack.

Bob looked at him blankly for a moment. "Oh, you mean your luggage check," he said. "We don't use 'em over here,—at least not generally. All you'll have to do is to claim your box and bags at Euston. Come on."

Jack followed at the word, entered a car which seemed to him to consist mainly of open doors, crossed a narrow aisle and

entered a compartment with opposite seats, where Lady Angela was already installed.

"Put your cases up in the rack," said Bob. "Now here we are, all right. I'm goin' to get a paper. I want to see what I can find out about your airship competition."

Jack sank back into his seat without a word. The new impressions crowding on his brain left him without the slightest desire for speech, and Lady Angela, recognizing the condition, sat back watching him sympathetically. Ten minutes passed. Bob strolled in with an armful of papers, which he immediately began to scan. Five minutes more and the train started. Jack felt the thrill of the discoverer, as the wheels gave their first movement. He was off at last into the realm of which he had dreamed so long,—into the land of his ancestors.

Roaring through black tunnels relieved by spots of light, through rows of brick-

walled warehouses, across dingy suburban streets, by a common where men clad in flannels were playing cricket, the train passed into a country where the soft green of the hedgerowed fields seemed to awake old instincts of pleasure.

The scenes seemed once more to be unreal as those of the theatre. A cluster of farmhouses, a tiny village with thatched roofs surrounding an old stone church crowned with a Gothic tower, and then, on a high bluff nestling in a clump of lofty trees, the gray walls of a castle! Of a sudden it all turned real, and Jack realized that he was moving, living in the sister-land across the sea,—that he was in England.

Bob broke in on his reverie with a sudden exclamation.

“Say, here’s a go!” he cried, waving his newspaper indignantly. “Here’s something about the airship competition. Too jolly much, I should say. Parliament’s passed a bill at the instigation of some little Eng-

landers, makin' the competition for the airship engines open only to British firms with a British subject as chairman of the Board of Directors. What chance will you, an American, have against such a proposition?"

CHAPTER FOUR

MR. BENJAMIN TWOMELL OF THE INNER
TEMPLE GIVES SOME VALUABLE ADVICE

BOB'S report of the action of Parliament proved correct. No application had been received from any foreign firm up to the time the bill was passed, and it was considered, therefore, that no one would be injured. Three British firms, the Mannheim Company, the Ayretoun Company, and the Maxwell-Stern Company were already entered. As a concession, an amendment had been added to the bill, stating that applications from British firms might be admitted up to a date three days before the trials were to take place.

The date of the first trials was set nine days away, and the place was given as Teritet in Switzerland, the Swiss Republic

having extended their hospitality. The atmospheric and topographical conditions about Lake Lemman made the choice of this location preferable to any that could be obtained in the British Isles.

As he finished the column, Jack sat for a moment in silent retrospect. Then he straightened up and spoke slowly. "This last thing is too much. I've not believed there was anything but coincidence in what has happened up to the present time, but now I've about made up my mind there's somebody after me and after my engines. Here's my experience on the dock at New York in the first place. They try to keep me from taking the boat. Here's the burglary of an aëronautical engine in the second place, of an engine that would be worth next to nothing to anybody that wasn't going to use it for aëronautics —"

Bob could not wait for Jack's third place. "Who do you think it is?" he interrupted, anxiously.

Jack hesitated a moment before answering. "I can't see anybody but the Mannheims," he said slowly. "The other competing firms are much smaller, and both of them have a good reputation. The Mannheims are a big house who've got the reputation of being by far the worst of the bunch. But I can't be sure," he went on, "although they've pinched good men's ideas along this line more than once. This bill in Parliament, though, is undoubtedly the work of some wire-puller."

Bob sat up aggressively, with a peculiarly British attitude. "If you fancy," he began hotly, "that Parliament passes bills from such motives —"

Jack waved his straw hat before his friend's face. "Cool off! Cool off, Bob," he remarked soothingly. "I tell you they play politics more or less everywhere."

"Now, boys," said Lady Angela, laughing, "don't quarrel. The thing is done. What we want to do now is to devise some

way of getting Jack out of his difficulties. It seems to me that the thing for Jack to do is to go to see Mr. Twomell. In a case of this kind expert advice is rather necessary."

"Just the trick," cried Bob exultantly. "Great idea, mother. It takes a woman after all to see the obvious thing to do."

"Who's Mr. Twomell?" asked Jack.

"Our solicitor," answered Bob. "Good fellow, great cricketer and an old varsity oar."

"He is an excellent lawyer besides those more important qualifications," said Lady Angela with a smile. "I don't think you could be in better hands. If there is a way out of the difficulty, I think he'll find one."

With a sense of relief, Jack threw his responsibilities temporarily aside, and watched the fascinating pictures before him.

Poppies flecked with crimson the yellow of the fields; smocked laborers leaned on

their hoes to watch the train; slow jogging carts passed on the country roads. Once, by a crossing, he saw a high cart with two horses driven tandem by a pretty girl, with a stolid groom holding the bridle of the prancing leader.

Then came terraced brick houses, rising in monotonous row after row, as the train entered the outskirts of a town, then factories and shops, a main street which showed a double-decked tram, its top filled with passengers. More factories followed, more monotonous houses, now some detached villas with formal gardens showing from behind high walls, then a long stretch of park, where a herd of deer in a sun-dappled shade started at the rushing train.

The twilight was coming down as the train sped through Harrow.

"Nothing but brick from now in," said Bob. "Practically all the rest of the way it's London."

At last the long train drew into the

terminal, where Bob, leaning from the window, called lustily for porters. Their luggage was quickly claimed and piled on top of two "growlers" or four wheelers, and it was but a brief time before Jack's carriage rolled across the station courtyard, between the great stone pillars that mark the entrance to Euston, and out into the quiet squares beyond.

"It 's Bloomsbury for us to-night," Bob had remarked. "We always stop at a place in Russell Square. We're not so tremendously long on tin, you know, so we don't go to Mayfair. You come along with us, and if the people there can't put you up, they'll know somebody who can."

A short stop at the Burnes' lodgings proved that their telegram from Queens-town had been received, that there was no room for Jack at that house, but that they had secured a room for him in Torrington Square, just beyond.

A moment's parting, a last "See you to-morrow," from Bob, and Jack took his way again towards his destination. There he was ushered by a trim maid into a room looking out into the trees of a fenced garden in the middle of a quiet square. He was domiciled in London at last.

Where he was or how he got there mattered little to Jack that night. His steps seemed still swayed by the motion of the boat; the throb of the engine still hummed in his ears. He undressed swiftly and jumped into bed, where he fell at once into a dreamless sleep which lasted till a repeated knock at the door brought him up with a startled "Yes!"

"Gentleman to see you, sir," came the answer. "A Mr. Burne, and I brought your hot water, sir."

"Show Mr. Burne right up," called Jack, and in two minutes Bob came through the door.

"Hullo, slow-boy!" he began. "Nine

o'clock. You are a later. Hurry up, and come down to Twomell's. We've got to reach there by half after ten to see him. He's going to play at Lord's this after. I got him on the 'phone this mornin'."

A breakfast of golden marmalade and rolls, of tea and the inevitable toast on its plated rack started Jack on his way. The cases were locked in his closet, the door of his room was locked, and, with the mistress of the lodging-house warned, Jack felt he could leave his burdens safely for a few hours.

As the two boys stood in the house door, the trees of the little garden in the square stood dripping disconsolately in the heavy mist, and the fronts of the houses across the way showed lights along the whole façade, despite the late daylight hour. The whole scene was dark and gloomy. The maid beside them whistled shrilly on a tin whistle, a call soon answered by the beat of hoofs on the pavement as a han-

som drove up, its side-lights showing yellow through the fog.

"Middle Temple by way of Trafalgar Square," said Bob, as the boys jumped in. "One and six if you do it right."

"Thenk you, sir," came from the roof; the long whip cracked as the boys closed the apron before them, and they were off.

"One and three is enough for the trip usually, but this is a bad day," said Bob parenthetically, in an undertone. "You give a London cabby his fare and a tip. He can't live otherwise."

Round two sharp corners, by another gardened square, past shops and hotels, the hansom sped. Jack sat silent, gazing out at a gray, dim city till a church on the left caught his view and he leaned forward. "St. Martin in the Fields," said Bob briefly. "That's the National Gallery, where the Turner pictures are, we're just passin' now on the right, and here's Trafalgar Square."

A wide space of drifting fog, a glimpse of

a great central column whose top bore a commanding figure, a glimpse of guarding lions and of heroic statues, a sound of splashing water, and the great square was passed. The cab swung sharply to the left into a maze of motor-busses and horse-busses, of cabs and wagons.

A few hundred feet farther to the right and Bob exclaimed, "Charing Cross."

Jack leaned forward to see the drifting, watery clouds crossing the courtyard of a station where busy traffic moved. A little farther beyond, and Bob spoke again: "Here's the Hotel Cecil, and the Savoy's just beyond, in through those gateways."

On and still on through the dream city they sped, past a church straight in their path, then by some huge public buildings on their left.

"Law courts," said Bob. Then a moment later: "If you'll look up there, you'll see an image of old Temple Bar. This is where the original Temple Bar stood, and

if we'd been by here a few hundred years ago we'd have seen it lined with traitors' heads. This is the entrance to the city."

The cab slowed to a walk and stopped before a black arch, through which Jack could see a semicircle of dull light. "Here we are," said Bob, as he threw back the apron and jumped out. Jack followed.

Bob paid the driver, who touched his hat and disappeared. "We'll meet mother here," said Bob as they proceeded. "She had some business to do with Twomell this morning, so she said she'd come down ahead of us."

The darkness of the arch gave way to the semi-light of a small square. The light of the square gave place to a yet narrower, blacker passageway, which led to yet another square, the sides of which, like the first, showed row upon row of yellow window lights.

"Twomell's stair," said Bob, as they turned into a narrow entrance.

Three toilsome flights followed. "They ought to put an elevator here," growled Jack, as he struggled upward through a darkness illuminated only by a single faint light at the head of each stair. Bob laughed.

"What iconoclasts you fellows from the States are, anyway. Put a lift in the Temple! Why, 't would make all the Knights Templars in the old round church rise in their graves. This is not half bad. Here we are."

The twentieth century office which the boys entered was a contrast indeed to the ancient setting in which it stood. Modern filing cases filled one side, a broad table was in the centre, a telephone, with the queer combination receiver and transmitter which the London exchanges still affect, was on the wall. A clerk seated on a high stool, with a quill pen behind his ear, seemed the only thing which fitted the background rather than the centre of the stage.

"How do, Mr. Ayres," said Bob to the clerk. "My mother here?"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Burne," the clerk replied, climbing down from his stool. "Lady Angela Burne arrived twenty minutes ago. Mr. Twomell saw her directly. I am glad to see you back, sir. How did you find your cousins across the water? Hands across the sea, sir. The possibilities which appear to exist in the States have always fascinated me, sir."

"Great country," said Bob. "Here's a chap from the States with me. Mr. Ayres, this is Mr. Collerton."

"Mr. Collerton, sir. I'm glad to meet you, sir," said Mr. Ayres. "I have a great regard for your country, sir. I hope to see you again. Mr. Twomell will be ready now, Mr. Burne, so I must show you in. He told me to show you in when you arrived, sir."

The clerk opened a door into an inner office as modern as the exterior one. Lady

Angela was seated in a big chair at one side of a massive desk, from behind which rose a long form in gray tweeds.

"Hullo, Bob," said Mr. Twomell. "Good to see you."

"Good to see you, Mr. Twomell," said Bob warmly. "How'd you come out yesterday?"

Mr. Twomell smiled. "Seventy-four and not out yet," he said. "But if this beastly fog grows any worse, we can't go on this afternoon."

"My eye, but that's a rippin' score against as good a bowler as Cox," said Bob. "I'd like to go up to Lord's and see you play this after." He suddenly remembered himself. "Pardon me," he said, "but let me introduce Mr. Collerton, Mr. Twomell."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Collerton," said Mr. Twomell cordially. "Lady Angela's been telling me about your experiences. If you'll sit down while Lady Angela gives me two signatures, I'll be at your service."

As Lady Angela signed her papers, Jack watched the lawyer. His long, wiry form and lean face showed evidences of training and fitness too seldom seen in the American professional or business man of the same type, who commonly takes his exercise in spasmodic jumps instead of in regular daily routine. The clipped upturned moustache, the loose tweeds, the browned cheek and hands showed the sportsman. The finely intellectual face showed the mental ability. Twomell's heavy, black-rimmed, double eyeglasses, the wig boxes on a shelf, and the line of law books bound in heavy calf were the sole tributes to his profession evident.

Lady Angela finished her papers. Mr. Twomell folded them carefully, filed them, and then, snapping his double eyeglass together, he turned to the boys. "Now, Mr. Collerton, I'm ready," he said.

Jack had carefully thought out his statement of affairs, and swiftly but logically

he brought forward the salient points, his father's sole ownership of the engine, the attempts to dispose of the invention to the United States, the decision to enter the competition, the start for England, his father's accident, and the adventures of the trip across.

"Now as regards credentials," he said. "Here are letters to the United States Consul General, to two members of Parliament, to four members of the Aëro Club, and to three prominent men of science." He placed the envelopes on the desk in a pile. "Here are our passports and the card of my father's lawyers in Boston. By cabling them, you can get any further credentials you may need. Lastly, here is my power of attorney, *viséd* by the British consul in New York, which gives me full power to act as my father's representative in all matters."

"One thing more," added Bob. "Here's the clippin' from the *Times* about the matter."

With a snap, Twomell opened his double eyeglass, fixed it firmly on his nose, and then began to go carefully through the pile of papers before him. Half-way through the list he paused, and looked up with a smile. "I see you have a letter for Herr Mettelin, the greatest aëronaut of them all."

"Yes," answered Jack. "My friend, Mr. Gardner, gave me that letter. I only hope I shall be able to use it."

"You may have an opportunity," said Twomell. "I saw by this morning's paper that Mettelin was experimenting in Switzerland at Lucerne, and you may have a chance to stop there, either going or coming." So saying, he turned back to his task and continued it until he had read every document, ending with the clipping from the *Times*. This last he read twice. Then he rose and paced up and down the room for a few times before speaking.

"I happen to know your father's solici-

tors," he said. "Have had some dealings with them, in fact. So it's a simple matter to verify all this by cable. As a matter of formality, as long as the letters of introduction are for your father instead of for you, I fancy we'd better do that. That done, everything else is straight, so far as the legal side goes. But the action of Parliament stands right in the way. That act passed, there would be next to no chance to get a reconsideration in time for you. The only thing you can do is to organize as a British Company with a British subject as Chairman of the Board of Directors. Incorporation is n't necessary, so far as I can see. Have you any friend who is a British subject, and whom you can suggest as your chairman?"

Jack shook his head hopelessly. "There is n't a soul here that I can think of."

"There are various reasons why I can't serve myself," Twomell went on, snapping his eyeglass thoughtfully. "And in the

short time left, the securing of a man who would be with you heart and soul would be a difficult matter."

Jack shook his head again. "Outside of Bob here, I can't think of anybody who could possibly do."

"Oh! If I only was n't a minor," said Bob, mournfully, "I'd do it in a minute, and mother'd let me. Would n't you, mother?"

Lady Angela nodded. "Provided you didn't cripple us financially, I should n't have the slightest objection. I should like to have you have a bit of responsibility, and I should be very glad to do anything I could for Jack. But it's no use wishing. You are a minor, and we have nobody on whom we could rightly call for such a service."

Mr. Twomell watched her keenly as she spoke. "You really mean, Lady Angela, that you would be willing and glad to have Bob serve if he could?"

“I certainly do,” replied Lady Angela, in surprise. “But why?”

“Because he can,” was the unexpected answer.

“Hooray!” cried Bob. “Good for you! Bob Burne, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Collerton Engine Company. How the fellows will stare.”

“But I didn’t suppose a minor could possibly serve,” said Lady Angela. “How does it come about that they can?”

“It’s rather an odd story,” said Mr. Twomell, smiling. “But I’ll tell you about it. You may remember a few years ago that they celebrated the semi-centennial of the discovery of the first aniline dye, mauve,—the first dye which was made in the laboratory, instead of being produced from a mineral or extracted from some plant of the fields.”

“I do remember something of it, now that you mention it,” answered Lady Angela.

“Then you may remember also that they especially honored at that time the discoverer of the dye, Sir William Henry Perkin, who, as a boy, fifty years before, had made the great find. I happened to know a friend of Sir William's well, and the story of the whole thing is as fascinating as a fairy tale.

“It seems Sir William was never intended to be a chemist, but as a youngster he was always meddling with test tubes, working with apparatus. He put up a little laboratory of his own in his father's house, as so many fellows have done since, and pottered around with one thing after another till he got together quite a stock of information. He went to every lecture on natural science he could reach, too, and finally got a place as assistant in a chemical laboratory.

“They were trying to make quinine where he was working, trying to make it in the laboratory from coal tar or its derivatives,

instead of getting it from the cinchona tree, and young Perkin worked on that problem night and day.

“He never found out how to make quinine in the laboratory,—they’ve never found that out to the present day,—but he did find something bigger. One day he found in a tube a dirty mass that seemed to stain things. No dye had ever been found in that way before. Every dye known had come either from some part of the earth’s crust, or from some growing plant, but Perkin had imagination enough to conceive that he might have made a dye chemically in the laboratory. I like to think of the youngster standing there alone in the rough laboratory, in the middle of the night, holding that tube with the dirty mass up in front of him, and looking at it by the dull oil light.

“It was a tremendous thing.” Twomell was waxing enthusiastic. “It opened a whole new era. Millions and millions of

pounds have been invested in dye works and in the manufacture of every kind of cloth, and all of it began that night when the boy Perkin found the beginnings of the dye mauve. But I'm talking too much about that," said Twomell, coming back to earth. "The point is, Perkin was a minor when he made the discovery, and he had a most tremendous fight before he could get Parliament to grant him a patent, and allow him to serve on the Board of Directors of his company. He won, however, and since that time, fifty years ago, minors have been able so to serve. They can serve to-day. Only a few times in the last half century has any one taken advantage of the possibility, but the law and the precedent are there; and if you, Bob, want to serve, and your mother is willing, I can put the thing through. And I can put it through in such a way that you'll undergo no financial responsibility."

"I agree," said Bob, looking at his mother.

"I do," said Lady Angela, smiling at her son.

"And I'm no end glad to do the same," ended Jack joyously.

"Then it's agreed," said Twomell. "I'll have the papers made out in a minute. Now there's just one thing more. I wish, Mr. Collerton, that you'd repeat to me those conclusions you gave Bob coming up in the train, which made you believe there might be somebody after you."

Jack nodded. "I believe there is somebody definitely interested in injuring my chances for the competition, because of three things — first the attempt at the dock at New York to keep me from sailing; second, the stealing of the cases; and third, this action of Parliament."

"Now your three competitors?" said Twomell, interrogatively.

"One, the Ayretoun Company; two, the Maxwell-Stern Company; and three —" Jack paused significantly — "the Mannheim Company."

"That's all I wanted to know," said Twomell, and he turned away.

An hour later, with agreements and releases signed, Robert Burne and John Collerton of the Collerton Engine Company, a British firm with a British subject as chairman of the Board of Directors, and with an American citizen as treasurer, walked down the dark stairs in company with Lady Angela.


"Got that done in time for the big day of the regatta, too!" said Bob jubilantly. "Now we're going home to Henley on the three-thirty train from Paddington. We'll drive straight to our lodgings. You drive straight to yours, and meet us at the train. You can spare one day, now we've got so much done, can't you? Think of the Diamond sculls to-morrow, and the race between Leander and the Belgians. Don't I hope we jolly well lick the Belgians this year, though! Leander's got a rippin' crew."

"I believe I will come," said Jack slowly. "I don't believe there is much I can do here. All I really must do is to get to Switzerland in a week or so more."

As the two passed through the dim arches and courts of the Temple, the fog seemed heavier than ever, the lighted windows shone still more dully, and the way through the arch to Fleet Street was black indeed.

"Looks like a London Particular, all right. Unusually heavy for this time of year," said Bob. "Hope we'll be able to get to the train. If it should shut down much more, traffic will be stopped. Seems as if all the Thames in back of the Temple Gardens there must be risin' in mist." He whistled, and two hansoms came dashing up. Bob and his mother stepped into one. Jack jumped into the other. "Good-by, Jack," called Bob. "See you at Paddington by the bookin' office at three-fifteen."

"Sure thing," answered Jack.



As the interchange of greetings passed, a man on the street stopped short just behind Jack's cab, and, when he heard Jack's call, came quickly to the edge of the sidewalk. An empty hansom was just beside him, whose driver raised his whip in query. The passer nodded. "That cab just ahead is going to Torrington Square," he said quickly. "Half a sovereign if you don't lose sight of it." "Right, sir," said the cabman, and the man jumped in.

Jack sat back unconscious of anything unusual, as the cab rolled slowly to his lodgings. He looked at his watch as they arrived. "Half-past one. How long will it take you to get to Paddington in this fog?" he queried of the driver. "I'd want an hour, sir," was the reply. "Very well then, wait. I'll be out in half an hour," said Jack.

Jack swallowed a hasty lunch, caught up the engine cases, called a man to help him with his suit-case, and stepped into the

hansom as a clock in the distance struck twice.

"Fog's in something terrible," said the driver. "I'll do the best I can, sir, but it'll be slow work."

The opposite side of the street was wholly hidden now, the trees in the garden of the square were nothing more than pale shades, and the passers-by were figures of mystery. The cases would not go inside the cab with the apron shut, so Jack had placed them just before him beside the dasher. They turned one corner, then another, and suddenly the cabman pulled his horse sharply up, as he almost ran into a wall slightly darker than the rest. Even the horse's head was shrouded in blackness now.

They stopped stock-still while Jack turned instinctively to look out of the window in the rear to see if anything were likely to run into them. He heard a slight noise, and turned quickly back to see a ghostly arm lifting the second case from the wagon.

He leaped forward, but the cases had gone. Jumping from the cab, he rushed to one side, ran into a child, then into a lamp-post, and then stopped still. He was lost in an ocean of fog which surrounded him on every side. He could see nothing.

CHAPTER FIVE

A REGATTA DAY AT HENLEY

JACK stood alone in the dense fog. He had completely lost his sense of direction. Pursuit of the robber who had taken his cases was wholly vain. Even his cab, with his suit-case on the seat, might be moving straight away from him through the thick mist.

In a perfect agony of disappointment and of vain regret, he realized bitterly how much worse his case was now than it had been before, when the cases disappeared for the first time. Then the possibilities of their recapture were confined to a limited area, and the engine had presumably been taken by some one seeking it for its real value. Now the case had probably been seized by some one of the throng of criminals who rise up in

the London fogs, despite the splendid army of the Metropolitan police. Now they were probably being rapidly borne to some haunt of crime whence they could never be recovered.

The sounds of the passing street came to Jack's ears with strange reverberations. The hoarse cry of warning drivers and the creak of wheels, an occasional slight scrape as of a collision reached him, and then a repeated cry drawing nearer. It sounded strangely like "Torrington Square."

Jack listened yet more sharply. Then it came again. The sound was certainly coming closer. Now other words became distinct. "Young man from Torrington Square, this way! Young man from Torrington Square, this way!"

It was the ingenious cabman seeking his lost fare. With a quick cry, Jack sprang forward. "Here I am! Here's the man from Torrington Square!" As he called, the cab drew slowly up alongside, and the

cabby, as Jack jumped on the step, leaned over with a look of disgust. "Well, you are a queer 'un," he exclaimed disparagingly. "Jumping out of a cab in a fog like this."

"My big cases were stolen," cried Jack despairingly. "And I jumped after the sneak thief, but I lost him."

"Really!" said the cabman, with deep interest. "You never could catch a thief in this 'ere fog. Your other case there?"

Jack glanced at the seat. "Yes, it's here," he replied.

"Where to, sir?" asked the cabby.

"Nearest police station," answered Jack, and the cab moved slowly forward.

The mist was lightening now, and the world around was coming into view; the horse accelerated his pace, and in a short time stopped before a yellow brick structure which bore the sign of the police. Jack jumped out, suit-case in hand this time, and hurried in.

A soldierly looking official stood behind

the desk as Jack entered, noted the facts in silence as the story was told, and stood thoughtfully for a moment as it ended. Finally he spoke.

"This is a case for Scotland Yard, I fancy, sir, rather than for any one else. Is there anything more you could give us?"

"No," answered Jack. "I've told you everything I know."

"Then I'll report in full," said the officer, "and if you'll leave me your address I'll send you word of anything we find. But I don't believe I can give you much hope, sir."

Jack left his temporary address. "John Collerton, Care of Robert Burne, Esq., The Grange, Henley-on-Thames," and went on to Paddington with a saddened heart.

Bob was waiting for him beside the booking office, and rushed towards him as he entered. "Mother's in the train. Hurry up," he said. "Why didn't you bring the cases?"

"Because they've been stolen again," answered Jack, in a dismal tone.

"What?" cried Bob. "Not really?"

"Really," answered Jack, and as they passed through the station and out into the train shed, he briefly recounted the story of the loss.

"Think you ought to stay here?" asked Bob, as he finished. "If you do, don't hesitate to say so."

"No," replied Jack, thoughtfully. "I don't see how I could do anything, if I was here. I might just as well go down with you. They'll notify me by telegraph if they want me, and I can run up easily."

"We can do better than that," said Bob. "We have a telephone at home. Call up the police station and tell them to 'phone you. Hurry, though."

"All right," answered Jack, hurrying off, "I will."

The trip down to Henley, with its glimpse of castled Windsor, its stretches of river

covered with gay pleasure craft of every type, of Maidenhead and of the whole beautiful Thames Valley would have been a source of deep joy to Jack under normal circumstances. Now he could only sit silent in his corner seat, gazing out of the window in blank misery.

The express swung off the main line at Twyford, and soon slowed down at the little Henley station, where the three stepped out into a sea of gay hats and sunshades, of white flannels and Panamas emblazoned with every color and device under the sun. As they made their way through the joyous throng, Bob managed to throw a sentence or two to Jack.

"You'd never know this old town if you saw it at another time," he said. "It's sleepy enough generally. It's only on regatta days that it looks like this. Then it's the focus for everybody who can reach here."

Out of the station they passed into a

trim station trap driven by a liveried coachman, on the broad grin at the return of his mistress and his young master, and then over the old stone bridge that crossed the slow moving Thames. To the right were boats galore. To the left, as far as the eye could reach, were punts, whiffs, and canoes, pair oars, four oars, and occasional launches. One distant bank was lined with gay house-boats, the other showed wide stretches of canvas pavilions, while low, wooden boat-houses stood in the immediate foreground. Jack drew a long breath, quite carried beyond his miseries by the spectacle. "I never saw so many boats together in my life," he said.

"Pooh! This is nothing," said Bob. "Wait till to-morrow. You can just about walk across the river then on the heads of the people if you wanted to. That's Leander's boat-house on the left we're just passin'," he went on. "Leander's made up of most of the big oars, the men who've

made one of the varsities. It's a picked crew from Leander that's goin' to row the Belgians to-morrow. Don't I hope they win!"

A short drive up the river, and the carriage turned into a semi-circular drive which ran back through some shrubbery to an old brick house.

"Home at last mother!" cried Bob. Jack had a confused impression of greeting, white-capped maids, of a cool long hall which through a farther door gave a glimpse of green lawn and shining river, of a long, bare staircase, and finally of a cool room, spotless in chintz and muslin, which looked out on a tiny formal garden, a clump of trees, and a stretch of lawn ending in a boat-house and the river.

A quiet dinner and a stroll in the garden afterwards calmed his troubled nerves, and once in bed, Jack slept soundly. Waked the next morning by sounds from the river, he looked out to find Henley early astir.

A house-boat on the opposite bank, already gay with bunting, was filled with a party of chattering girls. Jack put on his flannels and came down-stairs to find Bob already there. A quick breakfast and the two boys started for the boat-house. Inside, a trim canoe and a square-ended punt lay side by side.

"I guess we'll take the punt," said Bob reflectively. "The canoe is a little too ticklish for this day. We'll take a couple of paddles as well as the pole, and if there isn't room to pole we can paddle. We'll have to paddle this afternoon, anyway. Don't ever remember having had a chance to choose before. Generally we have the house full regatta week, but we couldn't be sure of getting back this year."

As they cleared the boat-house, Jack watched Bob's easy manipulation of the punt pole with undisguised envy. With long, strong shoves, with clever balancing and steering, Bob made the clumsy appear-

ing craft shoot swiftly ahead towards the centre of the town and the old bridge. There the great day of the regatta was already begun.

The morning showed a card of splendid racing. Jack, forgetting all his troubles, shouted himself hoarse as Leander's eight swept gloriously by the finish, with the Belgians exerting every ounce of their strength some five lengths behind. Race after race showed fine form and splendid work on the part of the oarsmen. When luncheon time had come, Jack was fully ready to agree that the Henley Regatta was one of the great sporting events of the world.

A hasty luncheon was bolted by the boys, and in half an hour they were hurrying back to the river, this time accompanied by Lady Angela. The crowd of the morning, great as it had been, was augmented now by hundreds of craft of every description. Punts, canoes and launches, skiffs, wherries and shells, old boats, new boats,

and boats in every stage between, filled the river from bank to bank. In between them passed broad boats carrying small pianos and singers gayly dressed and masked. Music was sounding, laughter was ringing, and the mile of river was filled with shifting life in its brightest and gayest array.

As Bob and Jack paddled down the course inside the floating logs which marked the limits, Jack exclaimed: "I can't understand how they 'll ever be able to clear this course again!"

"They 'll do it, all right," answered Bob. "They 'll have to. It's the Diamond Sculls next."

Even as he spoke, the shrill warning of the police boats sounded, and the upper part of the course became cleared as by magic. Nearer and nearer came the official launches, and Bob hurriedly turned the punt to the nearest gate. Just as he passed through, the guard shot back the big log, and the punt rested right beside

the gate with a full and uninterrupted view of the course.

Far up as the eye could reach stretched an open pathway of shining river, bounded by its floating wall. On either side, packed so closely that bow touched stern and side overlapped side, so that paddles must rest within, and not so much as a hand could rest safely on the gunwale, were boats, boats, boats, filled to the limit of safety with eager spectators. Back of the smaller craft stood big house-boats gay with diverse ornaments. The gray stone of Phyllis Court stood out in relief on one side, opposed by the white canvas of Clubland on the other, and back of all the incomparable verdure of the shores rose in serried beauty from the banks of the Thames.

Suddenly there was a stir far up the course, a movement just discernible to Jack as he leaned far over the boat's edge. The sound of a pistol shot came dully to his ears, and a swelling cry, rising

in regular waves, increased in volume as it approached.

There were two white streaks now and two flashes of sunlight that lifted and sank. Presently the streaks took form and became two slim shells, holding two men, who rose and fell with absolute precision; the flashes of sunlight became their rhythmic oars.

The sound-wave rose to its crest, then began to sink into a gradual diminuendo as the shells swept by, and Jack saw two faces set in grim determination, two powerful bodies at the very height of physical exertion, and two pairs of twinkling oars.

As the boats raced on, Jack leaned perilously to one side. As he did so, an equally anxious youth behind reached out too far, lost his balance, and came smartly down, clutching Bob's punt. Jack swayed and fell flat on his back, heels in air, and head buried in a pile of pillows behind him.

Submerged by the pillows, Bob's hearty laugh reached through as he struggled out

into the light. As he came out from the pillows, he faced upward into the sky above, and saw a sight which made even the finish of the Diamond Sculls a matter of slight importance. A hundred feet above, practically unseen by the huge multitude intent on the great race, a dirigible, operated and occupied by a single man, was pitching wildly.

Jack spoke quickly to Lady Angela, who was just in front of him. "Look up there at the airship!" Bob heard the words, and looked up as well. In a moment all the regatta was forgotten.

The dirigible was evidently in perilous straits. Now it dived suddenly and seemed about to plunge the tip of its cigar-shaped balloon into the crowd on the river below, while the operator, climbing forward on his ladder-like frame, seemed to be striving to make adjustments.

As the operator returned, Jack could see the screw propeller of the engine racing

frantically as the dirigible resumed its former position, while the man on the frame, for a brief space of time, sat still, clinging dazedly with both hands to his place. There was a strong breeze, and the machine was drifting up the river.

"It's going straight for our place," said Bob, as he watched. "There, the race is over and Blackton's won," he added, as the sound of the cheering at the finish died away. "Now let's hurry home."

The log gate shot back as Bob spoke. With a sudden turn of the paddle, Bob drove the boat within, and with all their force the boys sent her up the free course. On they sped past the watching crowd, who were only just beginning to see the airship. As they bent to their paddles, Lady Angela watched the movements overhead, and reported the passage of events.

"The ship's bow down, again," she said hurriedly, "and the man has gone forward. Now it's reversing. He has gone back to

his seat. The motor has stopped now, and he has left the engine. He's working on a rod with a wrench. It's rising. No, it's turning. It's sinking though. Yes! It's sinking steadily. It's headed straight for our house. If you pull hard, boys, we'll get there just in time. There's a name on the lower side of the balloon. I can't read it. If it will only turn a little more, I can get it. There it is. 'The Man —' that's all I can get. Now the side is turning so I can get it. 'The Mannheim Company.' Jack, it's one of your competitors."

The boys bent silently and doggedly to their paddles, forcing their way through the throng, with only Bob's steady "Thank you! Thank you!" as a warning note, and his "Sorry! Sorry!" as he bumped into some peaceful and surprised wanderer. The boats were heading up river towards "The Grange," and going became more difficult.

Lady Angela spoke again. "I think if the airship does land on our place, we had

better receive the man ourselves, and let Jack remain here in the boat. It may do no harm for Jack to stay out of sight."

"Good idea, mother!" said Bob explosively, as they drove the boat on. "How about the dirigible?"

"She's sinking fast," answered Lady Angela. "But we'll reach the shore before she can drift in. There's Lennen and Moxon now on the bank. They can keep people off, if any try to land. I don't think any one will. Jack, you had better push off, after Bob and I land."

With a final effort, the boys drove the boat up to the little landing place, where the coachman and the gardener were ready to receive them. A quick spring, and Lady Angela was ashore, followed instantly by Bob, who shoved the boat off as he went. Jack, with a few strokes, thrust himself into the midst of a dozen crowding boats, sat back and looked up. The airship was sinking directly down on the Grange lawn,

and the boats were crowding along the banks. The "No Trespassing" signs and the watchful presence of Lennen and Moxon had prevented any from landing. Lady Angela and Bob were walking toward the house.

The airship took a last rise, then a final fall, and, just as Lady Angela and Bob reached the garden, some hundred feet in from the river, it descended slowly, as if tired from its exertions, into the branches of a great elm. Bob hastened forward to meet a man who came scrambling down with an anchor in his hand. Bob noted the heavy Germanic features and the high upturned mustache.

The unexpected visitor landed on the ground, fixed the anchor firmly, then turned, setting his heels together with a formal military air, and made a stiff bow.

"I must a thousand pardons ask," he began in a guttural voice, "for this my most to be regretted and unwilling descent from



Bob hastened forward to meet a man who came scrambling down

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the air. I am Mr. Emil Kunsch of the Mannheim Company of London."

"That's all right, Mr. Kunsch. You're entirely welcome to land at the Grange," said Bob, carefully omitting to introduce himself. "If your airship is all right for the present, don't you want to come in and wash up?"

The German looked at his grease-blackened hands and soiled clothing. "Ach!" he exclaimed. "There certainly nothing can be more necessary. The airship in its present state, whatever happens, must remain until I from London a man can get. Is there a telegraph station near?"

Bob saw a lead in an instant. "Telephone at your service right in the house," he exclaimed.

The German gave one pained glance at his airship, fluttering wildly above the elm, and started, limping, along towards the house after Bob. They entered the house and went straight to the telephone, hang-

ing in a small room at the left of the stairs.

"This is a single line, Mr. Kunsch," explained Bob; "so you can talk as freely as you choose."

"I thank you," said Kunsch once more, putting his heels together and making his formal bow. "You to the utmost have with kindness overloaded me. One thing more. Can you concerning the London trains me inform?"

Bob nodded, went out and closed the door. Then he deliberately did a thing utterly contrary to his ordinary habit of life and to his normal standards. He ran up-stairs to his mother's room where stood an extension telephone, one of the comparatively few in England, put in by his father some years before. Conversation passing through the main transmitter and receiver below was, of course, perfectly audible in the receiver of the extension.

Bob closed the door of the room and

stood for a moment before the receiver, debating the matter with himself. "Shall I deliberately overhear that conversation or not? I wouldn't hesitate if I thought there was a burglar down there who might tell a confederate where he'd hidden his swag. And I believe these Mannheim chaps are at the bottom of the stealin' of the cases. I made up my mind to that from what Jack said on the train and from the story he told Twomell. I believe I'm doin' the square thing in listenin'." He sat down decisively before the telephone, quietly took off the receiver and held it to his ear.

"The Mannheim Company this. Is it not so?" were the first words that reached him. The wrecked aviator had made a quick connection with London.

"Yup," came back an unmistakably British voice. "Wot you want?"

"Oh! It is the excellent Wilhelm, is it not?" asked Mr. Kunsch, in a propitiatory tone. "This is Mr. Kunsch."

"Umph! He did give me the right name, after all," thought Bob to himself.

"Yup," growled the voice. "This 'ere's William, all right. Wot you done now? Bust that 'ere airship ag'in?"

"It is to my very great misfortune, my dear Wilhelm," remarked Mr. Kunsch very hesitatingly, "that to my great surprise the ship to act refused here in Henley. Can you to fix it manage? I will it leave here and come to London."

"I can if I have to," replied William sulkily. "W'ere is it?"

"At a place, 'The Grange,' I am told," replied Kunsch. "You can at once come down?"

"Yup," growled William. "Oh, Mr. Kunsch!"

"Yes, Wilhelm."

"That agent from the States come in last night, an' he said he had the parcels he lost before, that he'd sent 'em straight ahead to you knew where, an' he was goin' "

there directly, an' he'd meet you there day after—day after to-morrow."

The listener's heart throbbed wildly as he heard the words.

"That he the parcels which he lost coming over he'd found, and that he ahead had sent them and there would be!" exclaimed Kunsch jubilantly. "Donner-vetter! He is a great man! Wilhelm, tell Mr. Schwartz to buy tickets for himself and for me, and a compartment in his name on the nine o'clock express for Paris from Charing Cross Station, reserve at once. Then you here come. I will not here be, I go away immediately."

"Yup," was the only reply that William made, and the conversation closed.

Mr. Emil Kunsch stepped out into the long hall of the Grange, to find Mr. Robert Burne calmly examining his watch and a time-table.

"You can just catch a train, by hurrying," said Bob. "And there's an empty cab

passing the drive now. Do you want me to whistle it, or will you wait?"

"Vhistle, vhistle! I beg," cried the German, losing his *w*'s in his excitement. The whistle blew and the hansom speeded up the drive.

Scarcely had the carriage stopped before Mr. Kunsch had jumped in. "To the station, qvick, double fare!" he called. The cabman turned his horse and sped away, while the German leaned out from the side of the cab, bowing farewells.

The cab had not disappeared behind the shrubs and trees of the entrance before Bob was flying out of the back door, shouting for Jack. Five minutes had scarcely elapsed before the boys were hurrying up the walk towards the house, while Bob earnestly told his news and unfolded his plans.

"You see," he declared, "it's evidently been the Mannheims who have been at the bottom of all the trouble. It must have begun when one of their men heard your

conversation with Powers on the dock. He must have passed the word along to another of their men who was sailing on the *Northumbria*, and at the same time he tried to keep you from gettin' aboard. The man on the ship stole your cases to get the engine, and somehow or other he must have kept track of you in London, for apparently it was the same clever beggar who stole your cases out of the hansom that stole 'em on board ship."

"He evidently ran for the Continent just as soon as he got 'em, and left word for this chap Kunsch to follow. Now Kunsch leaves Charin' Cross at nine o'clock to-night for Paris, to meet the chap who's got the cases. We don't know where they're goin' beyond Paris, but they do, and they know where the cases are. So we've got to keep close to them and find out from them just what we must do. Therefore the business of the Chairman and the Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Collerton

Engine Company is to sprint for the Dover-Calais express by an early train from Henley. We'll beat 'em yet. Personally, I'm bettin' on the Collerton Engine Company in this race. I'm bettin' the Mannheim Company can't sprint for nuts. Think I'm right, Jack?"

"You bet your life you're right!" exclaimed Jack enthusiastically. "I was mighty afraid I'd never see those cases again."

"Then it's up to us to make mother see things our way," said Bob. "That's all."

Fortunately mother did see things Bob's way. It's a wise mother who knows how to put responsibility on her son's shoulders. Only an hour behind the train that carried Mr. Emil Kunsch to London thundered the express that bore the two officials of the Collerton Engine Company to the metropolis, on their way to the Continent, and in hot pursuit of the missing cases.

CHAPTER SIX

A PHONOGRAPH ON THE DOVER-CALAIS EXPRESS

THE compartment in which the boys travelled up from Henley was full of merry-makers returning from their holiday, and there was no chance to talk. All the way Jack stared out of the window with unseeing eyes, trying to decide upon the next step more clearly.

Once in London the two drove directly to Charing Cross, bought their tickets for the nine o'clock express, left their bags, and sauntered out to while away the time of waiting.

"Got any more line on things, Jack?" asked Bob as they strolled through the lighted streets.

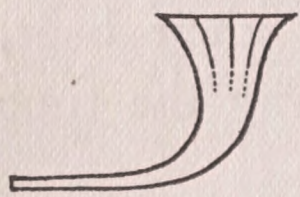
"No!" replied Jack slowly, as he halted

in front of a variety shop where the huge horns of some American phonographs thrust their brazen throats against the panes. Jack stood still, looking in at the window meditatively, with his hands deep in his pockets. Then he suddenly wheeled.

"Yes! By thunder, I know what I'm going to do. Come on in here." He dashed into the store with Bob somewhat reluctantly following.

Once inside the shop, Jack made his way straight towards the clerk at the back.

"Have you got a phonograph with a horn bent at right angles? Not the kind in the window that go straight out, but one that turns in a curve like this." He



drew a rude diagram.

The clerk nodded. "Yes," he said, "we've got just what you want." He bent down under a counter and brought out a big horn of the kind required.

"That's all right," said Jack. "Now I

want a clockwork, commercial machine for use with that horn, that will work both ways,—register on blank records any conversation talked into the horn, or give out through the horn the contents of any filled record.”

The clerk nodded again. “Here’s a good type,” he said, bringing forward a phonograph in its carrying case.

“Set it up,” said Jack. “I want to try it first.”

The clerk obeyed, and Jack tried the instrument thoroughly, speaking into it with various tones of voice from a whisper to an ordinary conversational pitch, then reversing it and listening to the record through the attached ear-pieces or receivers.

“That’s all right,” he remarked at last. “I’ll take it.”

Bob had been kept perforce in the background during the transaction, but now he could hold in no longer. He could not keep back a protest when he found himself

laden with the big curving horn of the phonograph, while Jack was directing the packing of the rest of the instrument.

"I suppose you think you have some reason for doin' this," he exclaimed. "But I'd like to know what on earth you're luggin' along all this plunder for. Here we've got our luggage down to the lowest possible point, and you go and buy a white elephant like this."

"Bob, my young friend," said Jack, benevolently, "you may be the chairman of the Board of Directors and I be merely your 'umble and hobedient sarvint, but there are times when I am on to my job. I may have been a rank outsider, as you so choicely expressed it a short time ago, but now I've got a great idea. I'll tell you in strict confidence, that I'm buying this apparatus to settle the case of Messrs. Kunsch and Schwartz."

Reduced to silence by his associate's eloquence, Bob held the huge horn with

such patience as he could muster, while Jack purchased, in addition to the instrument itself, two dozen blank records.

"Believe I see," Bob remarked as they left after a brief deliberation.

"Perhaps you do and perhaps you don't," replied Jack enigmatically.

"In short, Robert Burne, Esquire," he went on, as he hailed a hansom, "I'm endeavoring to give you a run for your money."

Laden with their purchases, the boys started back to Charing Cross.

"Seriously now, I'll tell you what I must do," said Jack gravely, as their cab turned. "It's most essential to the working out of my plans to get a reserved compartment just behind that of our friends, Mr. Kunsch and Mr. Schwartz. Can you manage it?"

"Fancy so," said Bob. "In fact, I'm rather sure I can. Luckily one of the porters at Charing Cross used to be a helper over at Eton. He's the chap I spoke to comin' out.

One I called Bill. He'll be waitin' for us, you'll see, when we get back. Fancy he can put it right."

The cab swung in by the little tobacconist's shop at the gate of the station, and came to a stop before the broad walk.

Bob jumped out. "Wait in the cab a minute, Jack," he said. "I'll be back immediately," and he disappeared into the station.

Jack sat waiting patiently, watching the arrivals and departures, the moving life of the station yard and of the Strand beyond. As he gazed, despite the excitement of the unwonted spectacle, a wave of home-sickness passed over him. If he could only hear from his father and know how things were going. If he could only have a word of sympathy or approval for his efforts. His thoughts reached across the sea, as if in a vain attempt to come into immediate contact. Yet there was no possible way in which communication could be effected.

He must play his part in this game of life alone, save for Bob's helping hand, and the lad squared his shoulders ready for the coming struggle, as he turned his thoughts to the future rather than to the past.

Jack's meditations were swiftly broken in upon by Bob's return with a porter in tow. Jack leaped out.

"This isn't Bill," explained Bob, in a low voice. "He's gone off to see to things. Says he can do it all right. This chap'll take our plunder here. Bill's got the bags."

The cabman paid, the two boys passed through the corridor and out into the train shed. They stood waiting for a moment at the railing, before their familiar bags appeared in the hands of a stalwart, grinning porter.

"'Tis all roight, Mr. Burne," said the newcomer, in a deep aside. "'T' train's made up and'll back in a minute loike. Keep t'oye on me."

"Good for you, Bill," said Bob. "Is n't that the train now?"

As the train backed in, Bill the porter went swiftly ahead, followed by the boys with their second attendant. Straight as for a mark he made for a "reserved" compartment, opened the door and ushered them in.

Their second porter stowed the phonograph and the supplies and disappeared with his tip. Bill lingered.

"Cost two p'und ten, Mr. Burne," remarked Bill, still grinning widely.

"Here's three sov, Bill," answered Bob, handing over three golden sovereigns. "Worth it, if you're sure."

"Oi am," said Bill, with a yet more capacious smile. "Thank you, sir." He bowed and disappeared.

"Now for some Sherlock Holmes work," exclaimed Bob, as Jack settled himself. "I'm off to watch for Kunsch. Pull down your cap over your face, Jack, and keep

your handkerchief to your chin. It won't do any harm to be careful now. Don't let any one in. We've got this compartment reserved, and you can keep anybody out."

Minute after minute passed, while Jack sat in the dim light of the railway carriage lamps, gazing outward. The time of starting was perilously near. Three minutes only remained before the hour when he saw two men pass, one very stout and panting, the other long and wiry, looking much as the aëronaut looked in the air. They entered the compartment just ahead. Bob had not yet appeared, but just as the final call came, the door swung open and the missing youth jumped in.

"Righto," he remarked joyously, in a low voice. "They're here."

The train started as he spoke, and the two boys busied themselves with arranging their luggage. They had hardly finished when the guard passed and repassed on the running board, and Jack looked out

to see the long line of the train ahead and behind their compartment speeding out through the night. The running board was empty, and the shifting lights from the windows were the only outward evidence of life.

"Do you think the guard'll be back, Bob?" asked Jack in a whisper.

"No," said Bob. "Most unlikely."

"Then get ready to put out these lights and stand by to help me to set up this phonograph so that the open bell of the horn will be just back of the compartment ahead."

Bob gave one stare, then a look of comprehension spread over his face as, leaning forward, he gravely patted Jack's head twice. Jack, meantime, was rapidly laying out his purchases on the seat. The warm night was most favorable to the scheme, for every window of the train was wide open.

"I've got to get out on the running

board for a minute," said Jack, "so I can place things. I've got everything as I want it now, and I can pick things up in the dark. I had to learn that trick in some of my ascensions. Look sharp when I come back. There's no time to lose."

With a quick movement, Bob shut off the lights, while Jack, reaching out over the door, turned the handle and swung out on to the running board. The express was in the outskirts of London, and was thundering on at its full speed. Far ahead Jack could see the red glow from the engine shoot up swiftly, as the furnace door was opened and then shut. The lights beside the track shone dimly, and the shifting illumination from the car windows threw splotches of shifting light along the track beside him. The train at its high speed swayed and swung, but the boy's nerves, steadied by his experiences above the clouds, held firm. He closed the carriage door, and leaned crouching forward toward the

compartment just ahead. He caught the fumes of heavy cigar smoke as he reached the side, and heard the stroke of a match. Then a word reached him — "*Bitte.*"

"Oh! They're talking German, are they," said Jack to himself. "Can't fool me that way. Here's where my long walks with old Herr Schmidt come into play. Now if you'll only go slow a minute or so, I'll have you phonographed all right," he went on, apostrophizing the unconscious occupants of the carriage; "but it's a harder job than I thought."

Jack swung quickly back into his own compartment and spoke to Bob in a low tone.

"I thought I could rig the horn of the phonograph up and hold it there permanently, but it won't work. I've got to get out on the running board and hold the bell of the horn so close to their window that all the sounds of their conversation will reach it and be recorded. The right-angle bend of the horn will enable you to

hold the box in the window of our own carriage. You take a strap off your Gladstone bag, put it about your wrist, and I'll take the other end. I'll pull it for a signal to start and stop, one to start, two to stop. See? Otherwise we might lose the whole record. We'll have to chance the guard. I don't think they've started talking much yet."

"They met for the first time, since Kunsch left Henley, in the station. I'm sure of that from the way they acted," said Bob hurriedly. "I can hold the box all right, while you take care of the horn. I know how to run these things. Went down to Edison's place one day while I was in the States, and found out all about 'em. Go ahead, but hang on tight. The Company can't afford to lose you."

It was but brief work for Jack to make the final adjustments of the phonograph and to place the blank records where they could be easily reached. Then he swung out

on to the running board once more, guided the bent horn through the window of their own compartment, and turned it towards the window of the compartment in front. There was a steady flow of guttural German from the two men. Jack turned his head from side to side in an attempt to find the direction which would give the best results with the phonograph's horn, and finally decided it. The two within were still talking about the action of the airship over Henley. That topic exhausted, the deeper voice exclaimed: "And now tell me of the cases?" Jack smiled an exultant smile and twitched the cord. He could just barely distinguish the sound of the turning of the mechanism above the noise of the train, but the higher tones of Schwartz had already taken up the tale, and the men within talked on, quite unsuspecting of any listener, natural or mechanical.

As Jack guided the horn to its most effective place, raising the angle to a point

where the sound waves from the wheels below would enter as little as possible, he blessed two peculiarities of the English railway, the perfect road-bed, which secured a noiselessness of running sufficient to make the conversation from within audible above the low undercurrent of sound from the train, and the provision made for the guard to safely traverse the running board at high speeds. That last provision gave him a good standing place and a safe rail through which he could pass his arm.

On sped the train through culvert and under bridge, by darkly outlined hamlet and through lonely field. Once it thundered through a dark tunnel, where the smoke-burdened air filled Jack's lungs till it cost an almost superhuman effort to hold back a burst of coughing. The tide of conversation rose and fell and rose again. Again and again Jack signalled Bob to stop or start until, at length, the story seemed nearly done, and Jack was straightening himself

to swing back again to his place, when suddenly another word caught his attention, and he crouched once more, holding the horn with a weary hand.

As he did so, the sound of an approaching train in the distance came to his ears. Far down the level track a huge eye seemed rushing towards him, coming nearer and yet nearer. Jack knew the danger of the powerful suction between two passing trains, and he took no chances. Rapidly pushing the horn of the phonograph back, he turned the handle, stepped inside, and shut the door carefully, just as the sound, becoming louder still, rose to its height with a roar and a rush of wind and the train was upon him. A glimpse of lighted windows, of occupants lying back upon the seats, of luggage vans and swaying interstices; a final blast of eddying currents, and the train was by. The twinkling of the rear lights in the rapidly increasing distance marked its disappearance.

Five minutes more and Jack was satisfied. Carefully, with every muscle aching from the long strain, he thrust the horn back, and climbed inside to fall back upon the cushions.

"Think you've got it?" whispered Bob, excitedly.

"Yes," answered Jack wearily. "I got it. It's all there. Wait till we can run it off later, and I'll tell you about it. I can't now. I must sleep for a few minutes."

"Lucky you stopped when you did," said Bob. "You were on the last blank record." But he spoke to unheeding ears, Jack was fast asleep.

By the time the train reached Dover, Bob had packed all the impedimenta safely, had relighted the lamps, awakened Jack, and was ready for departure. Bending over their luggage, the boys watched the two Germans descend from the train, and then followed the men at a safe distance, down the pier and on to the boat. Kunsch and

Schwartz went straight to a private cabin. Bob and Jack went forward on deck, and settled themselves for the trip across.

"There are too many people round to talk now, Bob," said Jack. "We'd better wait. What I want to know now is the shortest way to get to Lucerne."

"Righto," answered Bob. "Lucerne's our next stoppin' place, is it?"

"Yes," replied Jack. "Do you suppose we can get a time-table on board?"

"Don't need to," said Bob. "You're not the only forehanded beggar in this Company." He reached into his hand-bag, and produced a Cook's Continental time-table.

"Got everything here," he remarked. "All the trains everywhere. How to ask in French, German, and Italian for some of the things you want and more you don't want; where the golf links on the Continent are, and when steamers ought to go. Now you want to go from Calais to Lucerne.

If you'll shut up for about ten minutes, I'll have it for you."

Jack sat in silence watching the boat ploughing across the Channel, quiet enough to-night to belie its unfortunate reputation. The lights of Dover had quite disappeared by now, and the lights of Calais had hardly come in view. At length Bob spoke.

"Here you are," he said. "We left London at 9.00, reached Dover at 10.52 P. M. We should leave Calais at 1.50 A. M., and reach the Gare du Nord in Paris at 5.50 A. M. Then we can take either the 8.45 A. M. or the 9.09 A. M. from the Gare de l'Est for Lucerne via Bâle, arriving in Lucerne at either 8.19 P. M. or at 11.08 P. M. By the way of Bâle, Lucerne is three hundred eighty-five miles from Paris. Now which train do we take?"

"Either one'll do," answered Jack, lowering his voice. "They're intending to stay over in Paris a day, anyway, and the whole bunch of 'em are going to meet in Lucerne

day after to-morrow evening. I guess we'd better take the 8.45, though. There's nothing like being a little ahead instead of a little behind time."

"That's settled then," said Bob, with a yawn. "Let's go up and look forward. Calais lights should be dead ahead now."

Far in the distance shone the harbor lamps of the old French-English city — the last possession of England on French soil. Swiftly the racing turbines cut the distance down till the pier was reached, and Jack and Bob stepped out on Continental soil. Far more than before Jack felt himself an alien, a stranger, as he heard about him the swift French of the bystanders, the broken English of the porters, and saw the slouchy uniforms of the *gendarmes* and the loose blouses of the custom-house officials, so different from the trim Bobbies and Tommies of the London streets. This foreign land seemed thousands of miles removed from the shores they had left a

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couple of hours before. Even the buildings, little as he could see of them in the darkness, seemed of a different character.

The boys were lucky enough to get a two-berth *lit salon*, or sleeping-car compartment, as Jack put it, and here Jack made his first acquaintance with that necessity of Continental travel, the supplement, when they paid thirteen francs extra fare for the use of the berths.

Neither of the boys knew much that transpired between Calais and Paris. Jack looked out at one unexplained stop to see a quaint farmhouse, guarded by stiff rows of stately poplars, and a field flooded with light from the late rising moon. Again he looked out on a station platform, brilliant with electric lights, and read upon the sign the word "Amiens." He knew no more of the journey till the train stopped in the long bare terminal of the Gare du Nord.

"Now," said Bob, stretching himself, "I'm

going to give you a Cook's tour through Paris. Stir your stumps and we'll wire mother and Twomell that we're leaving for Lucerne, take a taximetre, breakfast in the Place de l'Opera, motor by the Louvre, through the Place de la Concorde, by Notre Dame, and back to the Gare de l'Est in time for the 8.45."

"I'm agreeable," said Jack. "You can't pile in too much for me. I wish I had a whole day in Paris, though. Gardner gave father and me some bully letters of introduction to some of the Continental Aëro Club people. To Durand and Jacqueline, to Erholdt, and, as Twomell mentioned, a cracking good letter to the biggest one of the bunch, old Mettelin."

"Rippin'!" remarked Bob. "If you get a chance anywhere to present that letter, take me along. I'd like well to meet the man who's built the best dirigible ever constructed, and done the best work in the air; but now let's attack our program."

They attacked it and they did it all. They breakfasted at one of the window tables of the Café de la Paix, drove down the Boulevards, by the great church of the Madeleine, stopped for a moment in the Place de la Concorde, drove through the broad avenue des Champs Élysées, passed the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile, and skirted the Seine with its thronging busy water traffic and its unsurpassed bridges. They called to mind the splendors of the French Court and the horrors of the Revolution, as they passed the long gray walls of the Louvre, looking down on the sunny river and the smiling gardens of the Tuileries, where white-capped *bonnes* chattered among their infant charges on the spot where the Swiss guard gave their lives. They even peeped for a moment within Notre Dame, and marvelled at the stately twin towers, before they drove station-wards. They did all that, and they got the 8.45 for Lucerne from the Gare de l'Est.

The boys were lucky again in getting a

compartment to themselves. They had scarcely settled themselves when Bob exclaimed: "Now for the phonograph." The train ran light that morning and the compartments on either side were vacant, so a rehearsal of the conversation seemed safe. Jack closed doors and windows, while Bob unpacked the phonograph, two sets of ear-pieces and the filled records.

The boys adjusted the ear-pieces, and Jack started the mechanism. Bob sat expectantly for a moment while the preliminary rattle of the machine and the steady sound of the train came to his ears. Then came an opening sentence in German.

"Oh! Pshaw!" said Bob, leaning back. "They're talking in German, and I don't understand a word."

Jack threw off the mechanism, put the record at its beginning once more, and turned to Bob.

"Luckily I do understand it," he said. "You let me run the records off, and then

I'll condense all the information and give it to you."

"Righto," answered Bob, and he leaned back comfortably. Jack picked up the ear-pieces, and heard the story which they told. Again the steady beat of the train deepened through culverts, lightened among the open fields, reëchoed as it was flung back by house walls, and roared through tunnels. Again in the far distance sounded an approaching train, whose rattling reverberations rose gradually to a crescendo of tremendous volume, and then faded away to a diminuendo, lost at last in the repeated steady pulsations of their own train. And through it all the conversation went steadily on, apparently a tale at first, later a discussion. As the last record ended, Bob turned to Jack.

"Ready now?" he asked.

"Not just yet," answered Jack. "I want to go over it once more."

Bob sat for a few moments watching

Jack's intent face darken and grow grim, as he heard the tale of the phonograph. Then he idly picked up a copy of the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, which Jack had bought as they came through the station. As he scanned it, one paragraph especially caught his eye and, as Jack laid down his ear-pieces and stopped the phonograph, he spoke.

"We may have a chance to meet Mettelin after all. This paper says he's still at Lucerne."

"That's good," said Jack abstractedly. "But now listen to this. The story of the phonograph still leaves us in a pretty precarious situation."

CHAPTER SEVEN

BOB BURNE'S FIRST APPEARANCE AS AN AVIATOR AT LUCERNE

"IT seems there are four of 'em in this business," said Jack, scowling. "All our trouble began when I was such a fool as to tell George Powers about our plans on the pier in New York. There are two American agents, the fellow who tried to keep me off the boat and another who crossed with us. I made that much out, but I don't know their last names. They used first names throughout in talking about them. I can't tell for sure just how the second chap, whose first name is Carl, by the way, stole the cases on the boat. The second time, though, is all straight. Schwartz told the whole story to Kunsch with great gusto, and they chuckled over

it well. When we left the Temple this fellow Carl, who came over with us, heard your last words to me, saw us, and trailed me in a cab. When the fog closed in he got out, walked by my cab and, at the moment the chance offered, stole the cases. Simplest thing in the world. When this rascal Carl was sure he had the engines all safe, he telephoned the office to have Schwartz and Kunsch meet him in Lucerne day after to-morrow. They're going to meet another fellow called Heinrich there. I don't think this fourth man is in the plot. From some things they said I'm inclined to think he is n't. They're going to put in our engine as their own, if it works out better than the one they have now. They're bound not to take any chances on that twenty-five thousand pounds. I rather guess we'll be on hand in Lucerne, and take a share in the game."

"Fancy we can get in on this, all right," said Bob, grinning. "It's going to be a

good fight. What you going to do with the phonograph now? Throw it out of the window?"

"No, siree," answered Jack emphatically. "I had a lot more in my mind in getting these records than just hearing what they had to say. I may want to jail those fellows, and the records would be invaluable in a court of law."

"Do you know," remarked Bob, with a look of owlish gravity, "sometimes you show signs of almost human intelligence. If I ever have to resign as Chairman of the Board of Directors, I'll consider you — for an office boy," he ended scoffingly.

"You will, will you?" exclaimed Jack forcibly. "You just wait, that's all. One of these days I'll get you up in a dirigible and settle your case there. I'll keep you up in the air till you beg for mercy. Just you wait," he ended menacingly.

"If I was n't too sleepy, I'd settle you for tuppence," responded Bob, with a mighty

yawn. "But I've got to take a nap now. I'll attend to you later."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth before he fell asleep, while Jack, after a few futile attempts to follow his example, gave his attention to the passing spectacle.

Out through the fertile fields, by waving meadows and vineyard covered slopes, through a land of enchantment, sped the train. The sturdy peasants in blouse and sabots, the women in the fields, the wayside crosses and the occasional old *châteaux* crowning lofty eminences gave wonderfully colored pictures of "the pleasant land of France." The long course luncheon in the trim dining-car, with the unhurried service, broke the steady movement at midday. Five forty-five P. M. saw the boys in Bâle, with its brief inspection by the Swiss customs, and sunset was near as they sped through the green ravines and sloping hills of the Swiss country between Bâle and Lucerne.

They had gathered their belongings for departure when Bob cried: "There's Pilatus!" and Jack leaned forward to see the shoulder of a cloud-capped mountain lifting far above him. Scarcely had he looked his fill, when Bob called again: "There's the Vierwaldstätter See, the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons," and a blue lake rippling in the last gold of the setting sun met his view. On they swept and drew in to the station of Lucerne.

"Hotel de l'Europe for us," said Bob. "It's farther out of town, but it's got a great view of the lake, and we can eat on the terrace. We've been over here two summers and I know Switzerland fairly well."

Rattling over the bridge by the quay that edges the long front of the Schweizerhof, past the Kursaal, and up the road they drove, stopping by the end of the little tram line at a garden-bordered, white hotel, which looked over the lake towards

Pilatus on the right and towards the Rigi on the left. The night had shut in as they arrived, and, wearied from their long journey, they spent little time in preparing for bed.

The next morning was clear and beautiful. Breakfast over, the boys strolled out into the lounge, where Bob picked up the little morning paper. He read it idly for a moment, and then gave a sudden start of attention.

"Here, Jack," he called. "Here's an airship proposition for you." He rapidly translated the French of the brief item before him.

" 'Herr Mettelin has not as yet been able to make any of the long trips planned for his dirigible, owing to the illness of the operator who controls the engine. He has sent to Paris for another operator, and will begin his series of ascensions as soon as one arrives.' "

"There's a chance for you, old chap, if

you wanted it," continued Bob. "How'd you like a shot at being Mettelin's operator?" He handed the paper over to his comrade, who read it eagerly.

"Would n't I like to try Mettelin's dirigible, though!" cried Jack. "Nothing I'd love to do so much. I don't really see why I should n't go down and see if I can do anything," he went on slowly. "There may be something I can do, and I imagine we may have to wait round here to-day."

"I'm with you," said Bob briefly. "Come on."

The Schweitzerhof was gay with a cosmopolitan throng that morning, as French, Russians, Germans, Italians, Greeks, Hungarians, English, and Americans chattered in their diverse tongues. Here and there might be seen the deep, red-brown face and rugged form which proved the Alpine climber; but these types are rare; they belonged in the higher Alps. Most of the crowd here were pleasure seekers, whose

Alpine climbing was done chiefly on the mountain railways.

The two boys went to the gorgeously liveried *concierge* and asked for Herr Mettelin. The pompous official sounded a gong, a page appeared, and led them to the suite. Mettelin himself answered the summons to the door. Jack had a swift impression of an erect, soldierly figure, a frank, open countenance, and the clear eye and weather-beaten face of the sportsman, the type which persists on land or above it.

"Yes?" said Herr Mettelin inquiringly, in precise English, as he recognized his visitor's race.

"I am John Collerton, and this is my friend Robert Burne," said Jack, introducing himself. "I have a letter of introduction to you from my friend, Mr. Gardner, of the American Aëro Club. It is for my father and myself, but my father did not come across with me." He handed the letter to the aviator.

A quick change flashed over Mettelin's face as he heard Gardner's name. "Ach, so!" he cried. "My good friend Gardner! I have not seen him for almost a year, since I dined with him in London last autumn." He raised the flap of the envelope, read the letter swiftly and looked up, smiling. "Pray sit down, gentlemen," he said cordially. "I understand from Mr. Gardner's letter, Mr. Collerton, that you have had no small share in this great game of ours of conquering the air."

"I have had some experience," answered Jack modestly. "I've made forty ascensions, six of them at night. I can qualify by the rules of any one of the Aëro clubs. I acted as operator for Mr. Gardner during thirty ascensions."

"Ach, so!" said Mettelin in surprise. "You have begun young. You must have much to do with engines to be able to control Mr. Gardner's."

"I have," said Jack. "I've been inter-

ested in engines ever since I can remember. Engine building is my father's business. That's really one part of my errand this morning. I wanted to give you my letter of introduction, but I wanted also to offer to serve as your operator to-day if you wished. I have one day here, which is at your service."

Herr Mettelin hesitated. "If you know enough to serve, I should be glad indeed to have you. But you must pardon me if I question you somewhat closely." He paused.

"That's all right, Herr Mettelin," answered Jack. "I certainly should not want to go up in a dirigible with any man who didn't know his business. Ask all the questions you care to, and I will answer all I can."

"I shall be most glad if you do know enough to help me," said Mettelin cordially. "I am wholly at a loss else. It is most important that I make an ascent

under the special conditions which prevail to-day. Everything is right, and there is none to help me. My operator, as you probably know, is sick, and I have heard nothing from Paris.

"Now if you do not object," he said once more, "I will begin to ask you concerning your knowledge of aviation," and he began a rapid-fire series of searching questions, that explored the whole domain of airship construction and operation.

Bob, seated in a corner, watched the progress of the examination with amused and interested eyes. Swift as volleying tennis balls sped question and answer. Jack was hardly ever at a loss, save where some technical question had a nomenclature unknown to him, and brought up a difficulty quickly cleared when he found out what was meant.

Insensibly the examination passed into a discussion between equals concerning various aëronautic matters, a discussion which

lasted until Mettelin, with a start, pulled his watch from his pocket and exclaimed:

"It is full time to go! Your friend can come, too, if he will hold himself as we direct. Come, we must hasten to the shed!"

There was no further question of Jack's ability to act. That was taken for granted.

Bob, overjoyed at the prospect of an ascent, followed the absorbed pair as they hurried out towards the lake. Apparently, in the interest of the proposed ascension, Jack had forgotten his immediate errand at Lucerne; but in reality the presentation of his letter of introduction to Herr Mettelin had been deliberate. The path ahead was still fraught with unknown dangers, and the acquaintance of the great aëronaut was worth the time it took to secure it, even though there were but few hours to spare before Kunsch and Schwartz might be expected in Lucerne.

But all deliberation was cast to the winds now, in view of the coming ascent. The

passion for traversing the air, which had overmastered man since the earliest times, was full upon him.

A short walk towards the shores of the lake brought them to an enclosure, inside which loomed the huge balloon shed, a tent-like structure of bare boards. Out from the end towards the lake peered a huge inflated balloon, looking like nothing so much as the bullet of a cartridge expanded to an incredible size. Its coating, colored a golden yellow to absorb as little heat as possible, gave still more vividness to the resemblance, and the square ends of the shed, hiding the other end, cut off the bullet like the end of a cartridge.

"I had everything made ready this morning," explained Herr Mettelin, politely, turning to Bob, "as I did not know but that Fortune might be as kind to me as she has proved in sending Mr. Collerton here."

Bob nodded without speaking, for all his attention was consumed in the interest

of the scene and the prospect of the coming trip. The trio went rapidly through the small crowd before the gate, watching for the possible ascension. Two Germans raised a cry of "*Hoch, hoch, hoch, Mettelin!*" A few others joined in and they were past.

Once inside the gate, Mettelin turned, bowed politely, and then proceeded directly towards the shed. Just before the entrance stood a group of instruments. Herr Mettelin and Jack stepped to them, read the records carefully, and then the aëronaut turned to speak to one of the workmen.

Jack returned to Bob. "What are those things?" asked Bob.

"Oh, they're anemometers that show the velocity of the wind, wind gauges, and tell-tales to show its course, recording thermometers and barometers which give the record of the last twenty-four hours as regards temperature and pressure," answered Jack. "You can't have too much information about the condition of the atmos-

phere when you go sailing in it. Everything is as it should be to-day, however. It's a bully day for an ascension. But come on in. Here comes Mettelin."

Within the shed, and swaying slightly at its ropes, stood the great flying fish. Bob could see the general shape of the airship clearly now, and recognized that the front end tapered toward the rear. Both ends were pointed, and fins, much like the fins of a fish, stood out from the sides. Between the pointed ends stretched the long cylinder filled with the inflating gas. Below the cylinder was a ladder-like frame of approximately the same length as the balloon above, which ended in two propellers, that at the stern being much larger than the one at the bow.

Just forward of the stern was the pilot's station, with wheels and levers not unlike those of an automobile. In front of that were two rests for passengers where they might lie along the frame, and just aft of

the curve of the ladder frame of the bow was the tiny engine, with its petrol tanks and the place of the engineer.

In front of the engine were what seemed to be two box kites placed across the frame, making the whole lower part the shape of a cross. Bob had plenty of time for observation, as Herr Mettelin had departed on another errand, and he and Jack were left alone.

The boys had waited but a brief time in the shed when Herr Mettelin came striding towards them. "Now, Mr. Collerton," he exclaimed, "I am ready for you to try out the engine."

Jack moved forward to the tiny engine on the framework, and examined it searchingly in every part. Then he filled the automatic lubricator, and once more went over every part of the engine in detail. "This is your own province, Mr. Collerton," remarked Herr Mettelin, "so I shall not interfere. If there is anything you wish to ask, pray do so."

"Not a thing," answered Jack, rising. "Now I'll start her up." He turned on the gasoline, adjusted the carbureter, put his engine on the neutral, and bent forward to crank up. Easily and readily the engine responded with a low, steady chug-chug. Jack bent his utmost energy to listening for any irregularity of sound, but there was none. At last he rose, throwing off the power.

"All right, Herr Mettelin," he said cheerfully. "That's a good engine." It was only with the greatest difficulty that he restrained himself from saying that, good as it was, it was far inferior to his own.

"Then we will start," said Herr Mettelin. "Mr. Burne, when we get aboard, you take your place here," he pointed to the passenger's position. "Cling on by the straps, and lie flat on the cushions. Do not move, whatever happens, unless I tell you to. You are the scout who is to report the conditions of the enemy's forces. Mr. Col-

lerton and I are too busy with the dirigible to report what is going on below, so we shall expect a full account from you of all you have seen, when we get back."

The balloon came swaying from the shed, the three took their places, and there was a moment's pause.

"Ready, Mr. Collerton?" asked Herr Mettelin. "Aye, aye, sir," answered Jack.

There was a hoarse command in German, a sudden movement among the surrounding workmen, a medley of cheers in various tongues from the little crowd outside, and Bob, looking downward, saw first the earth and then the lake, apparently falling away from him. Strangely enough, though he expected to be dizzy, the feeling of vertigo did not come over him. He had closed his eyes as they rose, but found himself able immediately to open them again, and measure conditions accurately.

Now they were skimming along, perhaps a hundred feet above the surface of the

lake. The distance to mother earth seemed perilously great. Bob raised his head and looked forward. There was Jack, bending lovingly over the engine, a piece of waste in his hand, whistling ragtime in a peaceful, melodious fashion. He looked carefully behind, and saw Herr Mettelin at the steering gear, looking as quiet and placid as though he were running an automobile at ten miles an hour on a deserted boulevard.

“Humph!” murmured Bob to himself. “If Germany and America are as cool as that, I guess Britain won’t be behindhand. Three cheers for England!”

The first uneasiness over, Bob quite gave way to the fascination of the trip. They were sweeping over the Lake of the Four Forest Cantons with the firm clean sweep of the swallow. Below, the water showed the passing of their shadow, and the decks of the occasional lake steamers showed a sea of upturned, interested faces. Now and

then they passed fishermen, intent upon their task,—and all the time they had before them the wonderful deep blue of the lake on this perfect summer day.

Bob turned his head and looked back at Lucerne, whose towers and villas, crowned by the sharp double spire of the church, stood out in relief against the deep green of the slope. Pilatus mounted at the right, its cone outlined sharply against the clear sky. Beyond Pilatus, far away in the distance above some lower hills, stood out the mighty battlements of distant mountains, and gradually the Mönch, the Eiger, and the Jungfrau came into view.

These three were old friends of Bob's, but they had a very different appearance here from the nearer view from Interlaken, with which he was most familiar. Straight ahead, the Burgenstock, the Buochser Horn and the Stanser Horn rose majestically, while to the left mounted the lower slopes of the Rigi.

The airship was rising now. Bob did not quite understand why, but as it rose he got a new impression of the lake. Now it looked as it does from the Rigi, a great shining cross sunk between bounding, sloping walls of green dotted with villages. They had reached the second narrows by Brunnen keeping straight ahead when Herr Mettelin swung on a wide circle and started to the left. Back over the lake they sped, along the shores and up one arm of the lake, across by Greppen, and up to the top of the bay. There they swung once more, and came down along the shore nearest Lucerne, at a distance of about thirty feet from the ground.

As they ran towards Lucerne, the dirigible flew slowly above the land, following the road that curves along the shore. Bob, already grown accustomed to the novel experience, was idly watching the white stretch below, when a scene of trouble ahead met his view.

An automobile with a broken wheel and fender was tipped half over, and three men in dust-covered clothes were standing beside it, while a fourth was working under the car.

With a start of amazement, Bob recognized two of the men. They were Schwartz and Kunsch. In their excitement, these two were talking in German, while the third man, the stranger, was answering in English. As they swept over, the men paid no attention in their gesticulating wrath to the dirigible above, and Bob heard one sentence in shrill English:

"But Heinrich waits with them at Meiringen for instructions, I tell you."

Then they were left behind, and Bob, looking backward, saw them suddenly discover the car overhead, and look up with open mouths. All the way back he pondered that sentence.

They had scarcely descended at the landing stage and made fast, when Bob,



With a start of amazement, Bob recognized two of the men

stretching his cramped limbs, hurried forward to Jack.

"See here, Jack," he said, "get out of this and come with me the first instant you can. I've got a new clew." Jack nodded silently, for Mettelin was coming towards them.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "for a good dinner, the best the Schweitzerhof can give. I owe a thousand thanks. It is the best ascension yet. No engineer or passenger could have done better."

"I'm no end obliged for the invitation, Herr Mettelin," said Jack. "But may I wait till I see our mail before deciding? Something may occur to prevent."

"Certainly," answered Mettelin courteously. "There is nothing more to do here. My workmen can do all. Will you accompany me back?"

Out they went into the street and down to the town where, at the end of the little alley near the bank, where the mail came in, Mettelin left them.

"I'll let you know whether we can accept or not in half an hour, Herr Mettelin," said Jack, as they parted.

As they waited for their mail, Bob hastily told his story. "So Heinrich is probably at Meiringen with the cases," he said, as he ended. Just then the clerk handed out two telegrams addressed to Bob. The first said: "Good luck. Mother." The second said: "Look out for Emil Kunsch, Wilhelm Schwartz, Carl Schmidt, and Heinrich Erheim. Signed Twomell."

As he read the words, Jack stuffed the telegram into his pocket, turned, and started on the run towards the railroad station. "Where on earth you goin'?" asked Bob, hurrying after him.

"Meiringen by the first train," answered Jack briefly.

As the two boys tore over the bridge to the station, the big clock was just pointing to the hour of five. Jack stopped for nothing till he reached the ticket office,

where he cried: "Next train to Meiringen, when?"

In his excitement he had quite forgotten his German, but the ticket seller, used to rapid interpretation of many tongues and of much facial expression, hurled back an answer, "*Zwei minuten*," threw a ticket across the counter and pointed to a door. Jack threw down a Napoleon, took back a handful of change, and rushed out to the train shed, followed by Bob. The train was just starting, as Jack jumped on the steps of the car. He stood breathless for a moment, and then called to Bob, who was running slowly along beside the train.

"You watch developments here, make things right with Mettelin, and join me when you can. I'll be J. Cope. J. C-O-P-E, at Meiringen."

"Righto!" said Bob, falling back as the train increased its speed.

Jack had entered the car, when he heard

his name yelled from behind. He leaned out, to see his friend racing madly after him. As Bob saw Jack's head, he slowed down.

"What's last name of beggar at Meiringen er — telegram?" he puffed.

"Erheim," shouted Jack. Bob nodded, stopped, and slowly plodded back.

CHAPTER EIGHT

JACK COLLERTON TEMPORARILY BECOMES
J. COPE

JACK had taken the 4.02 train from Lucerne for Meiringen by way of Brünig. He was due to arrive in Meiringen at 7.02, and the lad settled down to his three-hour run with a quiet determination to meet the immediate future as it came. He had decided to try for the recovery of the cases in accordance with conditions as he found them, yet, as he thought of resorting to process of law, he remembered, with a start, that he had left his passports and credentials in his trunk at Lucerne.

His letter of credit and his money were safely in his pocket, however, and with a sufficient supply of money he felt that he could go anywhere. The time was grow-

ing shorter and shorter, though. Dangerously short, indeed! Three days only were left before the hour of final entry for the competition. Then the gates would be closed against him. He must find the engine and get to Territet in three days!

Higher and higher the train climbed through wooded ravines, by rude and weather-blackened chalets, by winding road and rushing wayside stream. Jack, whose unusual power of absorption in his work, when the time came for absorption, was equalled only by his power of freeing himself from his cares, when the time came for freedom, let the beauty and strangeness of the scene enter through every filament of his being. Cattle, clustered at the rude, strangely shaped fences, stared in wonder at the passing train; a marshy valley showed a slow, winding river; sturdy bridges led to hamlets where the village church, with its pointed tower, stood on a little eminence; Sarnen with its public buildings was passed,

and then up a steadily rising gradient they ran to Giswyl. Jack realized that the climb to the Alps had really begun when he felt the shaking car take the rack and pinion of the mountain railway.

Then came a steady rise over rushing torrents and through dark tunnels till Brünig was reached, where Jack was glad to stretch his legs during the short halt. As the train ran slowly up the incline, small boys and girls ran beside it offering for sale fruit and dried grasses, and more than once Swiss maidens were seen selling the dried Edelweiss.

Jack, watching the station at Brünig, saw the station master hurry out at the very moment of departure and hand a telegram to the guard. "Orders of some kind, I suppose," he said to himself, and thought no more about it till he saw the official bring in the telegram and show it to each passenger. When it reached him he looked at the address.

"J. Cope. On 4.02 train from Lucerne to Meiringen."

He had started to shake his head when he suddenly recalled his last words to Bob. "Yes, I'm Mr. Cope," he said, and the guard, easily satisfied, handed over the envelope. Jack tore it open eagerly and read the missive.

LUCERNE.

J. COPE: Have wired Erheim to deliver goods to you on arrival of train at Meiringen. Proceed directly from there through Gletsch and Brigue to Territet. Will meet you there.

R. B. SCHMIDT.

For a puzzled instant Jack looked at the telegram. Could some strange trick of chance be sending a real J. Cope to Meiringen in the interests of the Mannheim Company? Schmidt was in all probability the third man in the party near the lake. He could hardly have reached Lucerne, however, in time to send this telegram. But R. B.! Those were Bob's initials!

A sudden flash broke through the clouds, and Jack, throwing his head back, burst into a fit of laughter which quite scandalized a gold-spectacled Herr Professor and his fat, sedate wife who were sitting opposite and peacefully viewing the valley.

Everything was clear now. It was the fertile brain of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Collerton Engine Company which had produced that telegram. It would simplify matters greatly if the man at Meiringen only believed his wire to contain real orders from the real Schmidt. Jack leaned back in his seat and gave way to a train of thought which held him fast till, at the shout of "Meiringen," he jumped lightly to his feet and was on the platform the moment his car stood still. It was just 7.02. The train was exactly on time.

Directly before him on the station platform was a short, dark-bearded man standing between two canvas-covered cases of the same general shape as the beloved, lost

engine cases. He was eagerly scanning the faces of the alighting passengers.

As he saw Jack he picked up his burden.

"Mr. Cope?" he asked. Jack nodded. "I knew you from Herr Schmidt's telegraphed description. So glad I am," went on the stranger, thrusting the cases at him. "Here is the engine. I take the train just coming in now back to Lucerne. Pardon me if I leave you abruptly."

Herr Erheim, with a parting bow, hurried to the ticket office. Before he emerged, Jack's train had pulled out, the return train had puffed panting in, and Jack, still standing beside the cases, saw his swarthy friend rush out, leap aboard and disappear. The train started with a jerk, slowly increased its speed and disappeared.

Jack stood alone with the recovered engine. His desire for laughter was yet unsatisfied, and, with a chuckle of triumph, he picked up the cases and turned away. A rude cab drove in sight; Jack signalled the

driver, climbed aboard and gave the order "To a hotel." The cabman cracked his whip and started down the broad street of the pleasant little Swiss village.

A short trip brought Jack to the Hotel de la Couronne, where a broad, vine-shaded piazza with its white-spread tables appealed to the hunger of the boy. A room was Jack's first necessity, however, and he hastened up the stairs with his cases borne before him.

Once inside the room, he locked the door hastily and threw off the shrouding canvas. There beneath were the well-known leather cases with their three locks, and it took but an instant for Jack to pull his keys from his pocket and unlock the three clasps.

He threw back the covers with a beating heart. Everything within appeared the same as when he had seen it last. Should he unpack the cases and check the contents? Jack hesitated at the question, but time was too pressing to waste, and he decided

to make no farther examination. There was but little probability that any deliberate injury would have been done the engine, considering the care with which it had been preserved. So the lad swiftly locked the cases again and with them in hand sought the first floor.

"I want to go through to Gletsch and then to Brigue to-night," he said to the man in the little office of the hotel. "Can I get a train?"

The man stared in amazement. "But there is no train through the passes," he exclaimed. "There is nothing but the diligence, which leaves from the post-office. The next diligence through the Grimsel leaves at six o'clock to-morrow morning for Gletsch. There are but two a day, the six o'clock and the one at twenty minutes before one. Monsieur must sleep here and take the six o'clock."

"What is Gletsch, anyway?" persisted Jack.

"It is the end of the route from Meiringen," answered the clerk. "Monsieur can get a diligence from Gletsch to Brigue which will leave in less than an hour from the time he arrives in Gletsch. He will then reach Brigue at twenty-five minutes before eight at night."

"No use," said Jack determinedly. "I've got to go to-night. Can't I get an automobile to take me through?"

The man threw up his hands with a gesture of despair. "But no automobiles are allowed on the passes," he cried. "No! There is nothing for Monsieur to do but to remain here to-night, and the Couronne can supply such an excellent dinner. It would be a veritable crime to go."

Jack thought a moment. "Who has charge of the diligences?" he asked.

"The postmaster at the post-office," explained the clerk. "It is but a few steps down the street. If Monsieur wishes, we will engage a place for him on the six o'clock."

"No. I'll go down there myself," said Jack.

Jack hurried down the street to the post-office, standing on the left of the street and easily distinguishable by its official air and by the courtyard of the post station beside it. He entered and went to the little wicket. "Can I get a carriage to take me through to Gletsch to-night?" he asked.

The man meditated for a moment, his hand on his chin.

"You can do better than that, if you wish," he said finally. "There is an extra diligence which came here with a party and which goes back to-night. It leaves in an hour and if you wish a place, you may take it."

Overjoyed, Jack paid his thirty-five francs and started back to the Hotel de la Couronne.

Used as he was to mad English and Americans, the clerk could hardly restrain his amazement at Jack's evening departure.

But finding his protestations useless, he finally shrugged his shoulders and proceeded to hurry up the dinner.

Jack dined well on the broad veranda, past which ebbed and flowed the quiet movement of the village. As he ate, he figured out the possibilities by the aid of time-tables. Leaving Meiringen at nine, he should reach Gletsch by four or five. If he got through on time, he could breakfast at Gletsch and take the early morning diligence for Brigue, leaving at twenty minutes before seven. He should arrive at Brigue at a quarter of twelve. There began the straight road to Territet with only two hours and a half of travel between the points. He could leave Brigue at 2.58 and reach Territet at 5.28. An arrival the next night would give him two full days in which to file his application.

Dinner over, Jack crammed his pile of time-tables and folders into his pocket and started down the street, following a porter

with the cases, now divested of their concealing canvas coverings. "No use in lugging around all that extra weight," thought Jack, as he removed them. "Of course the reason they put them on was to conceal the real appearance."

Out in the middle of the post yard stood the diligence, but the horses had not yet appeared, and as Jack climbed up into the *banquette* and settled his cases safely, the clerk, with whom he had spoken, passed him on his way off duty and greeted him with a friendly smile. As he saw Jack's suit of light flannel, a look of solicitude passed over his face.

"Ah! But you should have changed to heavier clothes for a night trip over the pass," he said anxiously. "Get your heavy things from your bags and put them on, I pray."

Jack laughed. "I haven't any heavy things with me," he said. "They're all coming later."

The clerk turned on his heel and re-entered the post-office, reappearing with a big cape and a couple of heavy horse blankets.

"There is a *balerine*," he said, holding out the cape, "and here are a couple of heavy blankets. You will need them all. and the guard will bring them back to me if you ask him to return them to Herr Biewindt at the post-office, Meiringen. If you go down the valley of the Rhone you can send them back from Brigue as well as from Gletsch. All know me on this route."

The offer was too kind to be refused, and though the warm summer night made Jack feel that it was an unnecessary precaution, he took the wraps gratefully and stowed them on the seat beside him. The clerk departed, and Jack was left to his meditations.

The grooms brought out the horses with their traces clattering at their heels, and the driver and guard strolled slowly from

the door. They climbed to their places on the little shelf at the front. The grooms fastened the last buckles and handed the reins to the driver. He threw loose the brake, chirruped to his horses, and they were off.

The first of the way was a steady descent into the valley of the Aar, the rushing stream that, cutting its way through the great mountain barriers, runs beside the steep pathway through the Grimsel.

Down the long windings along the mountainside the diligence passed, under the full splendor of the moonlit night. The long valley below showed scattered lights, and sounds of laughter and quiet talk came from occasional roadside groups. Through tunnels and past ravines they went into a natural basin where, at villages with a post station, they paused to leave a letter or to change the sweating steeds for fresh horses.

By easy gradients the long climb began.

The air was sharper now, and the lad gladly shrouded himself in the folds of the heavy *balerine*. The narrow road, just wide enough for two carriages to pass abreast, ran like a shelf on the side of the ravine, while far below the raging torrent broke in white froth among rocky boulders.

They were still climbing through the clear cool air, and Jack, in his high seat, was dozing in the warmth of the *balerine*, when the noise of singing came to his ears. He started up as the sound came nearer to see a company of Swiss soldiers marching at ease, preceded by their band.

To his amazement every man was flower-laden. The bass horn ended in a huge bouquet, the bugles seemed as vases, and every man's gun was tipped with flowers.

One of the men, with a steady aim, sent a sweet-smelling Alpine bouquet straight at Jack's head, and in a moment he was deluged with blossoms. As he emerged laughing from the shower, he found it hard

to realize that the apparent crowd of laughing schoolboys could be a part of that sturdy band of Swiss soldiers who hold the Republic intact to-day, as their forefathers have held it for centuries.

Jack had need of all his wrappings now. The air was piercing as a December night. In three hours he had come from midsummer to midwinter, but the friendly aid of the post-office clerk served him well, and nestling back on the wide seat, enveloped in the folds of the cloak, he fell asleep.

Jack woke with a start, as the diligence stopped before a gray stone building standing in a barren waste, where banks of snow whitened the ground. It was the old Grimsel Hospice, once a refuge for travellers crossing the Grimsel, now an inn. A man with a lantern was talking earnestly to the guard.

"This is the post-office official," said the guard, looking up at Jack and jerking a thumb over his shoulder. "He wishes to ask you some questions."

"Are you Mr. J. Cope?" asked the official, consulting a telegram which he held in his hand.

"My name's Collerton, John Collerton," answered Jack calmly, every sense alive.

"You have two canvas-covered cases?" went on the official, interrogatively.

"I have two leather cases," said Jack, and he brought his luggage into view.

The official scratched his head, and looked first at the cases and then at the telegram. "That does not fit," he said finally. "It says here 'two canvas cases.' And you have a *balerine*, too. It says here, 'no outer garments, gray suit.'"

Jack waited breathlessly for the guard to explain the loaned *balerine*, but he kept silence. Either he did not know of the loan, or did not care to be involved in the matter.

The official seemed much perplexed. At last a look of relief passed over his face. "If you are named Collerton, you must

have something to prove it," he said cunningly.

"Certainly," answered Jack, blessing the wisdom which had prompted him to give his right name. He dived into his pocket, produced his black leather case and opened it. "Here is a letter of credit made out jointly to my father and to myself, Express Company checks made similarly, some of my cards, and a power of attorney made out to me by my father."

Jack watched the official sharply as he handled the various pieces of evidence, not only to ascertain his feeling, but also to make sure his valuable property did not disappear.

The examination concluded, the official handed the papers back to Jack and shook his head.

"It is all right," he said. "None of these things agree. The cases are not canvas-covered. There is an outside garment. The name is Collerton and not Cope. You

may go. Clearly they have made a mistake."

The guard jumped to his place at the word. The horses started up, and the diligence creaked and rumbled off. Jack was safely past another danger.

As they resumed the slow upward climb, Jack mused over the brief recent conversation. "Of course," he said to himself. "they could n't really hold me for stealing my own cases. There's no chance of that when I am simply recovering my own stolen property. What they might have done, though, is to delay me long enough to keep me from getting the engine to Territet in time to enter. I'm going to leave Brigue on that first train, anyway, and get the entry made the earliest possible moment."

He was roused from his reverie by the sudden disappearance of the moon, and he looked up to see snow walls towering for six feet or more above his head, as he

sat in the high *banquette*. It was the first of the snow cuttings on the top of the Grimsel.

Through an unbroken plain of white they plodded on, the wheels now crushing the hard snow, now striking on frozen ground where the snow was worn through by passage. The slopes were wholly desolate, as the moon fell, and Jack only realized that they had reached the top of the pass by the creak of the brake as they began the first descent. As they descended, a thick mist held them as in a soft, clinging blanket, and its chill grew in upon him more and more as he sat shivering, till all at once, as the diligence rattled downward with increasing speed, a sudden lifting, like that of a rising curtain, brought them out from under the cloud.

No scene like this had ever met Jack's eyes before. As far as the eye could reach, gigantic mountains towered, their peaks flushed with the dawn, their sides blanched

with their coverings of snow. The whole Bernese Oberland seemed stretched out before him in one great panorama, illuminated like a flaming missal. Below the radiant sky of morning rose the crimson and golden of the lifting terminals. Sheer white tapestries as yet untouched by the swift rays of the dawn stretched downwards to the warm gray of the vegetation below the snow line, a vegetation which merged into the rich green of the forests, encircling the great cones below, and melted at last into fertile valleys where, in semi-darkness still waiting for the light, lay bands of silver water.

One feature stood preëminent. Far down in the foreground, thousands of feet below, lay the great Rhone glacier, throwing back the morning radiance from a million dazzling facets, a huge cut jewel in the midst of a worthy setting. The road downward into Gletsch, and the road ascending the upper Furka on the opposite side of the valley circled back and forth along the mountain

edges like the coiled rope of halyards lying on a deck.

Jack sat breathless with awe as the diligence flew downward, a breathlessness changed after a while to nervous excitement as the dawn changed to full day, and the four horses charged swiftly downward on sharp curves, where every moment the diligence seemed to be ready to fly off in a straight line and drop a few thousand feet on the hotels below. But nothing happened, after all. The diligence reached the lower level and rattled up to the Hotel Glacier du Rhone without a single mishap.

A wash and a good breakfast at the hotel freshened Jack greatly, and it was with a cheerful heart that, having secured another place in the *banquette*, he climbed aboard with the cases, and, starting on his ascent out of the valley, began the five-hour trip to Brigue. A comparatively short ascent was followed by a similar short descent, and the road down through the valley of

the Rhone proved a delightful contrast to the rugged ascent of the valley of the Aar.

Through smiling hay-fields where haying parties were breakfasting near the road, by wayside crosses with occasional intent worshippers kneeling before them, through rude hamlets and pleasant villages, they passed, with the broad river constantly beside them. Jack dozed from time to time as the hours sped swiftly. At length he roused himself, as he saw a great box-shaped conduit running along between the river and the road.

"What is that?" he called to the guard ahead.

"The water of the Rhone serving to run the electricity that pushes cars through the Simplon tunnel," was the reply.

And now the diligence entered the Italian Quarter of Brigue, where the many Italians who worked on this end of the great Simplon tunnel were stationed, and where every shop has an Italian sign, drove past the

big railway station, by the white-walled Italian looking shops and houses (Brigue is only forty-five minutes' run from Italy), and then, with a final flourish and an ostentatious gallop, drew up to the square.

Jack descended with his cases and stretched his legs. As he gazed around, he saw the guard approaching with a uniformed official, and a premonition of trouble came over him.

"Mr. Collerton?" said the inspector of police.

Jack nodded.

"I arrest you in the name of the Republic."



“I arrest you in the name of the Republic”

CHAPTER NINE

A STUPID JAILER AND A WISE MAGISTRATE

“ON what charge?” asked Jack coolly, forewarned by his experience at the Grimsel Hospice.

“Of stealing those cases beside you from Monsieur Heinrich Erheim at Meiringen. Your escape at the Grimsel did you no good. The telegraph was too much for you.”

“The cases are my own,” said Jack calmly, “as I can very readily prove. I am a citizen of the United States, and I shall appeal to the nearest United States consul. I warn you that you are making a very serious mistake.”

“That may be or no,” answered the official impatiently. “I have neither time nor inclination to find out. I merely obey

orders. You are to come with me to the prison, and the examining magistrate will decide on your case immediately. Come, hurry!" he cried, calling a cab. "I must take you to the jail, and get a train immediately. They had no business to give me this work, when they knew my haste to get away!" he murmured angrily.

Jack considered the situation swiftly. There was nothing to be gained by resistance. The man who resists the arm of the law determined on making an arrest makes a great mistake, so the lad preceded the anxious officer into the cab, and they drove swiftly to the prison.

The gates opened and closed, admitting the carriage to a small, paved courtyard surrounded by gray stone walls. Once safely within, Jack was hurried unceremoniously out of the carriage into an open door at one end, and then pushed into a small office, where a huge, shock-headed Swiss with goggle eyes and an open mouth rose

from a wooden chair beside a plain deal table to receive the newcomers.

The official hurried in behind Jack, and the driver brought up the rear of the procession, with the precious cases.

"Here, Reber," cried the official, "here is a case for the magistrate! Here is the telegram concerning it. Here is the stolen property. Here is the man. Put him in a good room and notify the magistrate. I must go to my train," and he started to dash off.

Jack stepped in his way. "Wait!" he said. "Those cases must be carefully looked out for, and I must have a chance to get word to my consul."

"Oh, pshaw!" said the official. "I cannot wait, I tell you. Here, Reber, put those cases in the vault. I can wait no longer," he repeated, and despite Jack's outstretched arm, the man dashed off after the cab driver, who had already disappeared.

The big Swiss stood stock-still, rolling

his goggle eyes and slowly shaking his head at Jack, who had taken a seat on a bare settle.

"A bad one. You are a bad one," he said slowly, in a rude *patois* which Jack just barely understood. "Reber knows. Reber can tell them every time," he went on fatuously. "Oh! They know that Reber knows. That is why they put me, Reber, in charge of the prison when the captain is sick." He shook his head again, with an owlsh expression of gravity.

"All right, Reber," said Jack, measuring his jailer. "Now I suppose you would think it wise to put those cases safely in the vault, wouldn't you?"

Reber considered the proposition slowly. "That is right," he said. "That is what Reber was told to do." He turned lumberingly, picked up the cases, took them to a big vault in the side of the room, opened the door and put them in. As the warden closed and locked the door, Jack heaved a sigh of relief.

"There," he said to himself, "if I can't get them now, I don't believe any one else can, and as soon as I get hold of the magistrate I'll get them back all right."

The jailer now raised the bundle of keys that swung at his belt, selected one, and motioned to Jack to precede him. Making the best of a bad situation, Jack obeyed, and the two passed out of the office, through a grated door and up some stone steps into a corridor. The jailer opened a cell door, and they entered. Jack looked around him. Four bare stone walls, a rude pallet, a stool, and a basin with running water comprised the whole tale of his surroundings. He turned to Reber.

"Now," he said, "I want three things: some lunch sent in at once; here is some money for it. I want to see the examining magistrate immediately, and I want writing materials to send some telegrams."

A look of low cunning spread over the jailer's face at the last request. "No, no!"

he said. "You don't trick Reber that way. No writing to confederates. No, no! Reber was n't born yesterday. They know what they do when they leave Reber in charge." He drew himself up proudly.

For the first time Jack lost his temper. "Confound your stupidity," he cried. "I am an absolutely innocent man, and I must have a chance to clear myself at once! I must get out of here immediately."

At the mention of stupidity, the warden's face became suffused with a dull red. "Reber stupid!" he growled. "No, no! That is what they used to say, but they can say it no longer. They would never have left Reber in charge of the prison if he had been stupid. Ah! ah!" he went on angrily, "you are a bad one! Reber saw it when he first clapped eyes on you," and he nodded approval of his own wisdom.

Before Jack could collect his wits sufficiently to decide upon a line of attack, his jailer had left the room and shut the door

with a clang. The bolt shot back and the warden, looking through the bars, stared at his prisoner with open goggle eyes and grumbled once more, "You are a bad one, a bad one! Reber stupid? Oh, no! But you shall have something to eat," and he turned away.

Jack leaped to his feet as he heard the departing footsteps, and clinging to the bars of his grated door, shouted after him, "Reber! Reber!" but in vain. All the satisfaction he got from the process was to see the huge bowed back and shaking head pass down the corridor and out of view.

Exasperated to the last degree by the experiences through which he has just passed, Jack for the first time nearly lost control of himself. Shaking from the struggle, he forced himself to walk calmly back to his bed, to sit down upon it, and coolly to review the situation.

"First and foremost, to consider things here," he said to himself. "The jailer is an

utter blockhead, whom I have unfortunately angered. If I can only get into communication with the examining magistrate rapidly enough, I may be all right still, but things have somehow got to be straightened out at once. There's little time left. It would do me absolutely no good to try to escape. If every door was open and I could get free, my freedom would be practically useless without the cases. What I must do is to get a telegram off to Bob and get into communication with the magistrate."

Jack's reveries were cut short by a luncheon brought by Reber's own hands, and passed through a slide in the door. When he had finished his lunch, he started in to consider affairs anew. "My best chance is n't with Reber. That's settled," he soliloquized. "What I'd better do is to get two notes ready,—one a telegram to Bob, and one a respectful note to the magistrate, asking for a hearing. If father had only been along, how different things would have

been! I seem to have been born with a genius for getting into messes. But here goes for the telegram and the note. I'll have to use my visiting cards for stationery. I have n't anything else. Lucky I have my fountain pen."

After brief thought, Jack produced the following notes:

ROBERT BURNE,

Hotel de l'Europe, Lucerne, Switzerland:

Am imprisoned at Brigue on charge of stealing my own cases. Come at once, bringing my credentials. Wire nearest United States consul of the facts and put him to work on my release. Cannot get interview with examining magistrate.

COLLERTON.

TO THE EXAMINING MAGISTRATE AT BRIGUE:

I am a citizen of the United States, arrested on a false charge, unsupported by evidence. I have been thrown into the prison at Brigue. I am refused an interview with you or the right to notify my friends or the United States consul.

I protest at this injustice done to a citizen of a friendly nation, and request an immediate examination.

JOHN COLLERTON.

When Jack had composed these, he took a twenty-franc piece from his purse and slipped the cards and the money into his waistcoat pocket. Then he sat down to his meditations once more. How to get the messages out of the prison and to their proper destination? That was the grave question which confronted him.

The prison seemed practically deserted on his side. He could hear no one in the other cells of his corridor, and the long afternoon passed almost without a sound to break the monotony. Dinner time brought Reber, bearing a tray and gazing about him with a stupid scowl. The jailer was too much incensed to pay the slightest attention to Jack's requests, and the lad, when the long day was over, threw himself on his bed and slept.

He was not destined to pass the night undisturbed. About midnight he was roused by loud talking and by shuffling steps, sounds which brought him quickly up into a sitting position. The noise came nearer, and he could hear Reber's voice. Hope sprang up in his heart. This might be the magistrate come at last. As the shuffling steps came nearer and stopped before his cell door, Jack's heart sank. His visitors were evidently Reber and two of his cronies, who had dropped in to pass a pleasant evening, and to whom the jailer wished to exhibit one of his most interesting specimens.

One of the visitors was a stout, short man, with a long, fair beard. The other was a shambling giant, so much like Reber himself that a relationship was evident. The three clustered about the bars, the shorter man in front and the two tall men behind. All three gazed at the lad blinking by the light of a rude lamp held on high.

The jailer shook his head owlshly. "You see it is as Reber says," he remarked with portentous gravity. "A bad one. He is a bad one."

With an entire assent, the two companions chorused his words, wagging their heads like china mandarins: "Oh! A bad one! He is a bad one."

Jack made one more appeal, convinced as he was of its futility. "Gentlemen!" he said, without allowing a trace of sarcasm to reach his voice. "Gentlemen! I beg you to convince Herr Reber that I must have an interview with the examining magistrate immediately."

Never a whit did his words impress his visitors, who stood for some minutes silently staring at him, only to leave at last to the sound of a slow chorus of "A bad one! Yes, a bad one!" The short, bearded man hurled one Parthian dart as he turned away, "Look at his shirt," he said. "Why, it is dirtier than mine, and he would pretend

to be innocent and a gentleman and to own those handsome cases!"

Jack laughed to himself as the sound of the retreating footsteps ceased. "There's more truth than poetry, I'm afraid, in that remark about my shirt. But really," he went on, "why shouldn't I be able to get some fresh clothes to-morrow, and work the jailer to let in a salesman to sell them to me — one who may take out my messages? I'll try that in the morning." Inspired with fresh confidence from the thought he fell asleep.

The next morning Jack preferred his request with his breakfast, pleading especially that some one be allowed to come in to measure him and fit him to fresh clothes. By working on the knowledge of the jailer's character which he had already obtained, he was able to get him to agree to consider the matter, and by noon he had reached a point where his captor said as he left: "Reber will get you a man with

clothes. But," he added suspiciously, "don't you try any tricks. If you do it will be the worse for you. Reber will know it if you do. He is sharp. He would not have been left in charge of the prison else."

With an anxious heart, Jack heard footsteps coming down the corridor about an hour after dinner. The cell door opened and the warden entered, followed by a young Jew burdened by two piles of paste-board boxes carefully tied together. The tradesman untied his parcels, opened them, and laid some white shirts on the bed.

"Now, sir," he said in good English.

Seldom had Jack ever greeted his mother tongue so gladly. The way was open now. He spoke quickly.

"I am an entirely innocent traveller, imprisoned here by a grave mistake. This stupid jailer will not notify the magistrate." Jack had just reached this point when Reber, who had been growing more and

more uneasy at the sound of the strange tongue, broke in sharply in his rude *patois*:

“Stop there! No more talking. Buy.”

As Jack selected one shirt from the pile, he managed, while the jailer was not looking, to show his gold piece and his messages, and to slip them into the folds of a shirt lying at the top of the pile. The young Jew nodded understandingly, and when the purchases were completed, gathered up his boxes and went away.

He left Jack to an anxious period of waiting. Hour after hour passed with no sign of deliverance. The weary afternoon dragged on into evening, and darkness settled down without a sign. Dinner came and went without a word from the jailer; and Jack, worn out with the anxiety of the day, finally fell asleep at midnight.

He awoke the next morning at the sound of a clanging door, and glanced at his watch, to find it already half-past eight. He realized with a kind of dull despair that it was

the final day of entry, that if he did not reach Territet by five that afternoon all would be lost, and the Odyssey of adventure through which he had passed would be all in vain.

He jumped out of bed and dressed hurriedly. He was becoming more and more convinced that his message to the outer world, sent by the young Jew, had miscarried, and that he was doomed to an indefinite period of imprisonment. He would lose no chances, however, and he dressed himself with all the care possible under the conditions, in order to make the best impression he could upon the hoped-for magistrate. He was beginning to get ravenously hungry while he finished dressing, and he was waiting expectantly when the sound of approaching footsteps broke upon his ear.

As the steps came nearer, Jack felt a sudden thrill of hope. The noise was wholly unlike the slow shamble of the giant jailer.

These sounds were brisk and methodical. The walker came rapidly towards the cell, jingling some keys, and paused for a moment before the grated door. It was a trigly uniformed inspector of police. He unlocked the door, swung it open, and bowed gravely to Jack.

“If you will precede me,” he said briefly.

That bow warmed the cockles of Jack’s heart. He might be wrong, but he believed it augured better things. Certainly inspectors of police did not bow to common criminals. Out through the grated door they passed, by the office and out into the courtyard, without a sign of Reber. A closed carriage stood waiting, with one man inside and two men on the box. The inspector motioned to Jack to enter, but he held back.

“My cases are in the vault in the prison office,” he said. “I cannot go without them.”

“The cases have already been sent to

the office of the examining magistrate," said the inspector gravely. The messenger had proved faithful.

They made a short stop, to give Jack a chance to breakfast in the private room of a café, then a brief ride brought them to a house on a side street. The two inspectors, with Jack between them, led the way into the house, passed through a hallway and into a large office, where a large desk at one end with a comfortable chair behind it indicated the magistrate's position. A smaller desk at one side was already occupied by a thin, bald clerk peering over his spectacles at the incomers, and engaged in fastening some black alpaca half-sleeves over the cuffs of his striped seersucker coat. Jack, to his great relief, saw his cases standing beside the clerk's desk.

The inspectors and Jack were scarcely seated when a door at the right opened, and the magistrate appeared patently finishing his breakfast as he came. He bustled

to his place, filled to its utmost capacity the big armchair, drew a large white handkerchief from his pocket and, removing gold-bowed glasses from shrewd, kindly eyes, opened the examination.

"Mr. Collerton or Mr. Cope, which?" he asked briefly.

"John Collerton of Salem, Massachusetts, U. S. A." answered Jack.

"Your papers?" asked the magistrate.

"My passport is in my large trunk at Lucerne," answered Jack. "But I think these papers may serve." And he handed his pocketbook to the magistrate, who made a careful examination of the documents, and then handed them to the clerk, who gravely made some notes and handed the letter-case back to its owner.

"Now if you will tell me your story in your own way, I think you will find it the wisest course to pursue," went on the magistrate.

Jack was more than ready to respond.

In the long hours of his imprisonment he had deliberately worked out his tale in every point, and his story of the strange events of the past weeks was strong and convincing. More than once, as the narrative progressed, he brought out a climax or an argument with such telling force as to bring a nod of approval from the thin clerk, who was busily writing down each word. The magistrate listened impassively throughout, his plump hands held judicially poised, the fingers meeting tip to tip. When Jack ended, the magistrate sat for some minutes in deep thought. At last he spoke.

"Can you show in any way that these engines which you have with you are really your own property?"

"I am not sure," said Jack slowly. "Let me think a moment."

Swiftly he reviewed all his belongings. The cases were unmarked, and the brass plates which were to have borne the name

of the "Collerton Engine" had not arrived when he and his father left. In consequence, the only means of identification on the cases had been the labels on the outside, all of which had been carefully removed while they were out of Jack's possession. Twice he ran over the whole of his possessions and each time he came to a blank wall at the end. He shook his head. "I don't know," he said.

"Think about it a little longer," urged the magistrate, impressed more and more favorably by the frank candor of the youth.

By one of those queerly illogical trains of thought that sometimes persist even in times of great mental strain, Jack found his mind wandering to other men placed in trying conditions, and half smiled as he recollected a story of an artist who had escaped from a savage cannibal tribe by drawing caricatures of the chiefs. As the word "drawing" flashed through his brain he saw the clew.

"I have it!" he cried, leaping up. "I can draw every part of that engine from beginning to end from memory, and you can compare the original and the drawing afterwards. Now I certainly could n't have learned all that about the engine between the time they say I stole my own cases at Meiringen and the time they took them from me here at Brigue."

The magistrate shook his head slowly in assent. "That is right," he answered. "You could not. If you can sit down here and draw plans of the different parts so that we can recognize them, that will be sufficient."

Jack wasted no time. With the clerk's desk, some sharp pointed pencils, a ruler and some white paper, he set to work. With never a false move, with never a moment's hesitation, line after line crossed the paper, dimension after dimension appeared in neat letters at the side of the sheet. As the third sheet was finished, the magistrate and the clerk, both drawn to the

shoulder of the absorbed lad by a common interest, nodded to each other in sympathetic approval.

"That is enough, my boy," said the magistrate. "Now unlock those cases there and show us these strange-shaped things you have drawn so well." Jack rapidly obeyed, threw up the covers and took out the three parts of the engine which he had drawn so roughly to scale. With the pleased interest of children, the provincial magistrate and his clerk examined first the part, then the drawing, and wound up by inspecting the artist with great interest.

"Well done!" exclaimed the magistrate, patting Jack on the shoulder. "I would not have believed it could be so well done from memory. That is quite enough to prove your ownership of the cases. I am sorry for all you have suffered in this case. That fool Reber will make no trouble for any one else, however. He has been discharged. You did well to get a message

to me. All the papers were at the jail, and I heard nothing more of the matter. I thought it strange, too," he continued reflectively, "that nothing more came from Lucerne. The rascal from whom you got your own cases must have got frightened after his first complaint, and appeared no more. He could have known of you only as Cope, for the word to arrest a man named Collerton came from the Grimsel Hospice, where you were stopped."

"Now," asked Jack anxiously, "if I am free, may I go? I must reach Territet before five o'clock."

"Bless my soul, yes!" said the magistrate, looking at his watch. "You must hurry, though. The next train leaves in twelve minutes."

"Thank you so much!" said Jack, seizing his cases and plunging through the door. "Good morning!"

"Good morning!" chorused the magistrate and the clerk, as the lad disappeared.

Out by the garden wall and past the sentinel poplars Jack hurried, hampered by his heavy cases. No cab was in sight, but just then round the corner came a cart driven by a sleepy boy. Jack leaped to the side of the cart.

“Five francs if you get me to the station in eight minutes!” he cried. For an instant the boy sat agape at the sudden invasion, until the five-franc proposition, having penetrated his brain, electrified him to life. As Jack held a five-franc piece out, the boy suddenly laid whip to the slow-moving nag, and started at a galloping pace down the street.

Through the cobbled streets they rattled, the wagon swaying and sluing till Jack had to use all his skill in preventing either himself or his cases from being hurled out. Now they came in sight of the station, and the clock showed the hour 12.58. It was the exact moment when the train left, and the long train of cars stood in the sta-

tion, with the puffing engine just ready for departure.

"Hurry!" cried Jack, and the boy, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the race, urged his horse on still more.

But all was in vain. The engine tooted its loud signal, the train started its slow motion, and Jack, leaping to the ground with his cases, reached the front of the station in time to see the rear end of the train rapidly receding from him a hundred yards away. For a moment he stood dazed at this latest misfortune. Then, gathering himself together, he hurried into the station office.

"What's the next train to Territet?" he asked.

"Two fifty-eight, reaching Territet at 5.28," was the reply. That train would be of no use.

"Can I have a special which would get me there before five o'clock?" asked Jack anxiously.

The man in the station office shook his head. "No. We should have to send down to Visp for an engine. As it happens we have none here to-day. You can do nothing better than to take the next train."

"Could an automobile take me through in time?" continued Jack.

"Absolutely impossible!" answered the station master. "In the present condition of the roads it would take at least six hours, the fastest you could go, unless a flying wind dropped from the clouds to carry you."

Suddenly all the company waiting in the station rushed to the doors and windows, looking eagerly upward, and a chorus of wondering cries arose. "Look at him! See them! See it go!"

CHAPTER TEN

THE COLLERTON ENGINE COMES TO LAND

JACK stood still, gazing absent-mindedly at the hurrying men and women. There was not likely to be any excitement here that would concern him. But as he meditated, he suddenly realized that all the people were peering upward, and that the cause of their excitement must be in the air, and not on land.

He hurried out across the veranda into the square before the station. Then he looked up. Hovering over the town at a height which would just easily clear the tree-tops was a dirigible balloon having a long, fish-like body and a ladder framework underneath, on which could be seen three men,—an operator forward, a scout in the waist, and a helmsman aft! It was

Mettelin's airship! There could be no mistake.

Whether the coming of the airship to Brigue was due to chance or to a direct connection with his own case, Jack could not tell. One thing, at least, was certain. Here was a way to get to Territet in time, provided he could catch Herr Mettelin's attention. The airship seemed to be heading slowly for the upper square of the town now, and Jack rushed along after it in the middle of the street.

As he ran ahead with upturned eyes, he bumped into many aërial gazers, saved himself from many more imminent collisions, and generally made himself a nuisance to the peaceful inhabitants of the town of Brigue. But every one was inclined to be good-natured, and his flashing smile and pleasant apology carried him through safely. The airship was almost above him now, and as he crossed a more open space he heard a well-known summons from the

clouds: "Hey, Jack!" That resounding bellow could come from only one throat.

"Hey, Bob!" cried Jack joyously, as the airship hovered overhead. "Good afternoon, Herr Mettelin!" he added courteously to the helmsman, intent upon his task.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Collerton!" responded Mettelin. "I came over here to ask you to accompany me to Territit. If you care to run the engine, and can tell me a place where I can descend, I will drop my operator here, and we can leave at once. Your cases can go on the framework directly in front of Mr. Burne."

Never did voice from the clouds carry better tidings. Jack answered eagerly:

"There is a large field over beyond the railroad station, Herr Mettelin. You can easily see it from your elevation, and I can reach it in ten minutes. If you will make the landing there, I shall be very glad to meet you and to take the engine."

"Very well," answered Mettelin. "I see the field. I will meet you there shortly."

Jack could hear the click of the levers in the stillness which had settled down over the crowd at the interchange of greetings between the messenger of the sky and this slight lad on foot, bearing two heavy cases, and Jack turned, to find the whole hushed assembly regarding him with wonder.

He motioned to two peasant lads. "Take these cases carefully," he cried, with a gesture, "and run ahead of me."

The boys obeyed, and the crowd opened for them as they darted through with Jack just behind. At best there was not a minute to lose. Jack had had too many ascensions not to know the possibilities of accident to some part of the delicate mechanism.

As they ran on past the station and across the bridge, Jack could see the airship slowly descending over the chosen spot, and just as the lad with his two porters reached the field a rope was let down and the operator dropped from his place.

The air was exceptionally calm, and the airship swayed gently, held at rest by Mettelin's skill, but a few feet above the ground, while the engine ran on with steady vibrations. Bob reached down, pulled up the two cases with a rope and lashed each firmly to the framework in front of him. "Righto!" he cried.

The operator had meantime divested himself of his leather coat and cap, and had passed them to Jack, who assumed them and stood waiting.

"Come aboard, Mr. Collerton," said Herr Mettelin, and Jack, at the word, swarmed up the rope and took his place at the engine.

Seated at his post, he heard the sharp, quick order to cast loose, saw the operator, in his shirt sleeves, throwing off the rope, which trailed for a moment, then cleared the ground and dangled below him, swinging in a narrow arc.

The buzzing signal before him sounded,

he threw in the clutch and they were off, rising above the town and heading straight down the railroad track. Jack made sure that everything was running well with his engine, and then, turning his attention to the rope, he pulled it aboard, coiled it, and settled back in his seat. They were safely off for Territet.

A "flying wind" had dropped from the clouds to carry him to the place of the competition.

Bob, in his comfortable perch, was enjoying to the full his second aërial journey. The trip from Lucerne by airship had duplicated Jack's earlier passage through the Grimsel and down the Valley of the Rhone, but they had come at a far swifter speed. He smiled to himself as he thought of the fun of telling Jack his experiences, threw an affectionate glance at the cases lashed to the framework in front of him, and then turned his attention to the pathway the airship was traversing.

No small part of Bob's two summers in Switzerland had been spent in walking tours with a tutor, and he had crossed the Alps through half a dozen paths. One year, led by a sudden vagary, they had chosen to follow the Rhone from its beginnings to its descent into the broad waters of Lake Lemman, and it was with special interest that Bob saw Herr Mettelin lay the course right down the valley of the Rhone, as the easiest and best way to reach Territet.

Swiftly they flew towards Visp, where the Rhone makes its first upward turn, and it was not long before the busy little railroad junction with its tiny, puffing, narrow gauge cars and whitewashed shops, flanked by some fine old houses set in formal gardens and guarded by poplars, came into view.

As he sped through, Bob thought regretfully of the rugged peak of the Matterhorn, just beyond his sight.

They were over Sion now, where towers and castles shone in the afternoon sun, and

Bob, instinctively remembering the sharp angle of the river near Martigny fell to wondering whether the airship, confined by wooded hills, could make the turn.

It did turn safely, ran like a bird through the narrows by St. Maurice, and passed out into the broad valley that runs from Bex to the head of the lake.

They were past the worst of the trip. The upper valley had scarcely given them air room to manœuvre. Cross currents and head winds had troubled them at times. But Mettelin's genius as a pilot had been equal to every emergency.

They passed Martigny in an hour and a quarter from their departure, and were at Aigle, more than half-way down the broad lower valley, in an equal space of time. As they swept on towards the lake, Bob felt they stood every chance of getting in on time.

Two things more than all else struck Bob in this bird's-eye view, — the enormous

water supply of Switzerland and her wonderful roads. Over and over again, as he looked downward, he had seen the huge form of the airship clouding some rippling stream or mirrored in some little lake. Again and again they crossed the river, and with each crossing saw the stream grow greater as it added to itself the rushing water pouring from the mountains. As a pedestrian, Bob had had occasion again and again to bless the Swiss Government for their splendid road-beds, but now, as he watched the long white ribbon of the highway rolling out before him and saw how close together were the road menders seated beside the road working with their little piles of stones, he realized for the first time the constant watchfulness necessary to bring about the superb highways.

They had been aided for a time by a fair wind, but just as they came in sight of Lake Lemman the wind shifted, and they were forced to drive the dirigible straight

into the very teeth of a good breeze. Jack glanced at the small clock set in the framework of the engine, and saw with relief that it was only half-past three. They had made the run from Brigue in record-breaking time.

Suddenly his accustomed ear heard a slight but ominous sound from the engine before him. With every sense alert, he bent forward. The sound continued. Trouble was brewing. Hastily he began an examination, opening and shutting cocks, trying levers and testing valves. Now the engine began to miss fire, and a loud explosion showed serious trouble ahead. Then, with a final burst of sound, it stopped and the airship was left to the mercy of the winds. Jack gave one rapid glance around to fix conditions in his mind before he went to work. That glance showed him that his time was short. They were out above the lake now, whose choppy waters were lashed by a breeze that forced the lateen sails of the boats to reef closely.

Ahead Jack recognized the gray walls and turrets of the castle of Chillon. Looking far down the lake, he saw the steamers ploughing their way up and down, and then took one glance behind him. There in the background towered the huge white wall of the snow-covered Dent du Midi, flanked on either side by out-thrust, forest-covered cliffs, which towered hundreds of feet above the level of the lake. The breeze was already driving the dirigible straight for the cliff on the left.

With set teeth, Jack started on a regular round of inspection of the engine, tested every part of his gasoline supply, and set and reset the needle valve in the vaporizer. Nothing seemed the matter. Every part appeared in perfect condition. Jack turned his attention to his spark, ran rapidly through the possible causes for defective sparking, and tested his batteries with the pocket volt-meter and ammeter. The batteries were perfectly good, and showed no sign of weakness.

Swiftly he examined his sparking points. They were clean and sound. The ignition mechanism was the next proposition. Twice over he checked off every part. No defect appeared anywhere.

Jack threw another glance behind him. The airship was being driven towards a rocky precipice which dropped a sheer hundred feet. He glanced at his friends. Mettelin sat imperturbable at the steering gear. Bob lay easily in his place, although both understood perfectly that the chances were strongly in favor of their being flung against the rocky barrier ahead within fifteen minutes. Old Prussian soldier and English school-boy were each true to his race. Nor was the American a whit behind. On him rested the lives of the others, and, with a grim determination, he turned again to the problem.

The trouble was in the electrical transmission. He was sure of that. He had eliminated every other possibility. Coolly as

though the framework were on land, he started back on the frame towards Bob. The batteries and magneto were just behind him, and neither would give the spark. The cases had been lashed on just behind the battery box.

In desperation as to the cause of the trouble, Jack started to climb beneath the frame. As he did so, his feet slipped, and he was left dangling in mid-air, three hundred feet above the ground. An involuntary groan burst from Bob's lips as he watched the struggle. But clean living and hard training stood Jack in good stead in his perilous plight. With a mighty effort, he swung back on to the frame and on top of the cases.

There was no time to rest. Swiftly Jack's hands felt over the wires which ran below the cases. Carefully he slipped his hand along the hidden circuit. There was the trouble. In lashing the cases, Bob had allowed the corner to come too near the

wires which led from the batteries to the engine. On the way up they had gradually loosened and had slipped yet farther forward. Gradually the insulation had been worn off, and a short circuit was the result.

Jack looked behind him. The precipice was much nearer now. Deftly he separated the wires, stuffed some cotton waste between them, recaught the cases in their lashings, and was back in his seat, acts which took less than a minute. Then he bent and cranked the engine. No sound ever came more sweetly to human ears than the familiar *chug-chug* of that gasoline engine came to Jack's. Quicker than thought he threw in his clutch, and the big propellers resumed their racing speed against the driving gale.

No skipper jockeying his craft in an American Cup race ever handled his boat more cleverly than Mettelin, as he took up the contest with the wind. During most of the struggle the dirigible had been in the dead calm which surrounds any airship in

the free air, no matter how fierce the gale. The voyagers however had gone too far. They were under the very wall of the mountain, and the eddying cross currents raged, shaking the airship like a leaf in the grasp of the autumn wind.

Little by little they gained, now a few feet, now a hundred feet. Now they were driven back, and it seemed as if the cause was lost; gradually, by almost imperceptible advances, they drew away, drew farther yet, and the fight was won. In half an hour they were well beyond the cliffs and beating down on Territet. Jack looked at his watch. It was twenty minutes of five.

Mettelin had put on full speed now, and the airship was responding nobly. At a quarter of five they had passed Chillon and were running up towards the town, when Mettelin slowed down his speed and Jack stopped the racing engine. As they crossed the wire of the little trolley line that runs from Territet to Chillon, and hovered over a

garden came the welcome order: "Throw out the rope!"

Like an uncoiling whiplash the sinuous rope flew through the air, and the airship rocked and quivered, as it strained at its leashes. Without a word, Jack swarmed down the rope and started off, followed by a yell from Bob, "Turn to the right. Follow the trolley line to the hotel."

At his top speed Jack bounded off down the middle of the road, till the long line of a big hotel came in view. Entering, he dashed through an arch and then through a whole series of magnificent sun parlors, billiard rooms, and lounges. A panting query, "The Airship Competition?" and a surprised servant pointed ahead.

As Jack ran on, he heard the big clock outside toll the first stroke of five. The second stroke found him in view of a room where a knot of men were standing near a gray-bearded Englishman in white flannels, who stood by the mantel. The third stroke

brought him inside the room, bursting on the dignified assembly like a thunderbolt.

"I enter the Collerton engine for the competition!" he panted breathlessly, as the last two strokes solemnly rang forth.

The crowd parted, and he saw the man in the white flannels snap the hunting case of his gold watch together approvingly. "A very sporting proposition," he said. "Are your engines in Territet?"

"Yes, sir," answered Jack, struggling for breath.

"And you are a British company with a British subject as Chairman of the Board of Directors?" went on the gray-bearded man.

"Yes, sir," answered Jack again.

"Then I think we can accept the entry provisionally, gentlemen, and we shall have the pleasure of watching another competitor in the trials," said the other pleasantly. "Day after to-morrow we will inspect the engines in the tent erected by the lake. I should like to have the gentleman who made

the entry of the Collerton engine fill out the necessary blanks." He paused. "And now, gentlemen, that is all for this afternoon. I wish you a very good day."

The group broke up. Jack looked eagerly around to see if Kunsch, Schwartz, or Erheim were present. He did not really expect to see the third, as he felt sure that the man from whom he had stolen the cases was entirely innocent of the plot, and that he was honestly convinced that the cases really had been stolen from him until the confederates had told him to the contrary. In no other way could Jack explain the bringing of the case against him and the utter dropping of it afterwards.

He saw none of the Mannheim people, however, and moved quietly through the group of engine builders and aëronauts to the secretary's desk. He noticed as he went forward that two or three men were talking earnestly to the man in the white flannels, and that curious glances were being thrown in his direction.

Jack, paying no attention to the onlookers, went steadily ahead about his immediate business of filling out the blanks in the long legal printed sheet before him. He was about half through, when the gentleman in the white flannels broke away from his conference and came over towards him. Jack rose as he came forward.

"I am Sir Gregory Hawes, Chief of the Aëronautic Division of the War Office," said the gentleman.

"My name is John Collerton. I am the son of Mr. Philip Collerton, the inventor of the Collerton engine," said Jack.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Collerton. Now, do you mind answering me orally a few questions which I could undoubtedly obtain from that rather wretchedly lengthy sheet"; he pointed to the entry blank.

"I should be very glad to tell you anything I can, Sir Gregory," said Jack.

The room was very quiet now, and all its occupants were clustered about Sir Gregory

Hawes and Jack. The lad felt as if he were in the presence of a court of inquiry, but he betrayed no sign of agitation. The doings of the last weeks had done one thing at least. It had given him a command over his nerves such as he had never had before.

"I do not think I have ever happened to hear of your father or of his engine," began Sir Gregory reflectively. "I have known most of the men interested in aëronautic affairs, too. Where has he been working?"

"In Salem, Massachusetts, United States of America," answered Jack briefly.

Sir Gregory looked up in surprise. "But I thought you said yours was a British firm, with a British subject as Chairman of your Board of Directors."

"It is," answered Jack. "We are registered as a British firm under the laws of Great Britain. Benjamin Twomell, of the Inner Temple, is our solicitor. A telegram to him will give you any information concerning our registration or standing."

"Is that Twomell the cricketer?" asked Sir Gregory with considerable interest. "I know of him, of course."

"Yes," said Jack, "he is the one. Our chairman is Robert Burne, Esq., of 'The Grange,' Henley-on-Thames."

Sir Gregory's eyebrows came together with a frown. "But Sir Robert Burne," he protested, "has been dead for three years. I knew him well."

An assenting murmur rose from two or three Englishmen present.

"It is his son, Robert Burne, who is our chairman," said Jack quietly.

A look of amazement spread over Sir Gregory's face. "You don't mean Bob Burne, do you, who was at Eton last year?"

"I do," said Jack.

"But he's a minor," said Sir Gregory.

"He is," answered Jack. "But minors are allowed to serve as chairmen of boards of directors under a precedent established over fifty years ago and seldom used since."

Mr. Twomell can give you the exact chapter and verse if you wire him. I cannot."

"Do you know where Mr. Burne is now?" went on Sir Gregory.

Jack smiled. "I left him less than half an hour ago in Herr Mettelin's airship, which was anchored in a potato patch some ten minutes' walk away."

Sir Gregory laughed heartily.

"My dear Mr. Collerton, I have n't a word more to say. If Bob Burne is swaying in the air as near here as that, we must have him down to dinner immediately. The rascal was my son's fag at Eton, and I've known him well. There is n't a cleaner, finer chap, England through. He'll be all the sponsor you need. I am delighted to hear that Herr Mettelin is here also. I understood he was not coming."

He turned to the assembly: "Gentlemen, I will say good day once more." And the group parted and strolled away. In five minutes more, only Sir Gregory, Jack, and the secretary were left in the room.

The lad had just finished the blank as Sir Gregory spoke to him again.

"Now, Mr. Collerton, if you have finished, suppose we see if we can rescue Mr. Burne and Herr Mettelin from the potato patch."

They started off, and, at a much slower gait than that at which Jack had come down, retraced the way. In response to Sir Gregory's kindly questioning, Jack briefly recounted the main facts of his story, carefully omitting all reference to the difficulties with the Mannheim Company. That part of the story could be told if necessary. Otherwise, Jack felt it would be wiser to bury it in oblivion.

As they approached the potato patch, they saw Bob and Herr Mettelin in amicable conversation with a gardener, whom they had apparently succeeded in pacifying for the damage done by their sudden descent. The airship swayed above them, held safely by its grapnels.

The brief conversation that occurred be-

fore Sir Gregory returned to his hotel served to put the Collerton engine on as good a standing as any of its competitors. He was scarcely out of earshot when Jack turned to the great aëronaut.

“Herr Mettelin,” he said with deep feeling, “you can hardly know how much I appreciate your coming to my aid in Brigue. I never could have reached Territet in time had it not been for you.”

Mettelin smiled. “You more than balanced any claim of gratitude when you kept me off that precipice,” he said. “At any rate, all the thanks are due Mr. Burne. The moment he received your telegram he saw he could not get to you in time in any other way, so he very wisely came to me. I was only too glad to try the trip.”

“That only expresses about one tenth of it,” said Bob. “The cheerful willingness to help in every way is something I shall never forget.”

“But now, gentlemen,” said Mettelin,

eager to change the subject, "it is time for us to depart." And the brief talk ended.

Sir Gregory had offered a place for the dirigible in the balloon tents already erected, and Herr Mettelin having accepted it, Jack took his position as operator once more, and they ran the big dirigible to the shore and saw it safely installed.

Bob and Jack stood before the tent, each with a case in hand, as Mettelin came out to them.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "there is yet an hour and a half before we must meet Sir Gregory. Would it not be a wise plan to begin setting up your engine? I shall be very glad to assist."

Warm friendships rise in times of danger. There were three aviators now bent on the success of the Collerton engine; Mettelin had thrown the whole of his splendid enthusiasm on their side.

Special, carefully guarded and locked, individual quarters had already been assigned

to the Collerton Engine Company. Jack handled each part lovingly, as he unpacked the cases and handed the pieces of the engine to Bob and to Mettelin.

Every part in the first case was in perfect condition. Jack had gone half-way down the second case when he took out one part with a gasp of dismay. The set of valves on which the most depended, the most unique and individual piece of construction in the engine, was badly shattered.

Jack held it up.

"Without that I can't do a thing," he said brokenly. "And I don't believe I can fix it. I don't believe anybody but my father could, either!"

Herr Mettelin took the metal from him and examined it carefully. Finally he shook his head. "I certainly cannot mend it, and I do not believe there is a man here who can."

Bob for once looked on in blank despair.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A SUCCESSFUL COMPETITION ON LAKE LEMAN

JACK turned the piece of mechanism over and over in his hand, while Bob and Mettelin watched him closely. Finally he shook his head once more.

"It's no use," he said gravely. "Certainly I can't do anything with it to-night. The only thing to do is to sleep over it."

"One other thing to do," remarked Herr Mettelin, "is to keep absolute silence. A reverse, if hidden, is half a success."

It was no slight strain for the two boys to attend the dinner given by Sir Gregory Hawes that night, and to keep a cheerful and undisturbed mien, despite the growing anxiety that was beneath. But they bore the test bravely, and reached their room at the hotel without having made evident by word or sign that they felt themselves on the

brink of possible discomfiture. They were sure of one thing, at any rate. No one could get at the engine now to do it further harm or to learn of its present helplessness. It was safe in the charge of the officials of the War Office.

Jack awoke from a fitful slumber about five o'clock the next morning, and heard Bob moving quietly in the next room.

"Hey, Bob!" he called.

Bob's tousled head appeared at the connecting door. "Hey, Jack!" he responded. "What do you say to gettin' up and goin' down to have an early look at Chillon before we start in on the day's work. That is," he continued, "unless you've got some idea about mendin' the engine."

"Not an idea," answered Jack. "I'll be with you as soon as I've had my tub." The cold water soon cleared away the fogs of the night, and it was a clear-brained pair who startled a drowsy waiter in the big breakfast room with a demand for "*Chocolat complet*."

Through the almost deserted corridors they passed, by porters cleaning windows and maids dusting furniture, out into the clear bright morning. The little town was not yet half astir as they strolled slowly up the same street down which Jack had raced so hurriedly the day before. Here and there a woman was scrubbing a door-step, or a gardener was clipping a hedge. Below, the lake stretched out towards Lausanne and Geneva, undisturbed save by the lateen sails of two fishing boats running wing and wing before a fresh breeze. The fresh white beauty of the Dent du Midi, glistening in the morning sun, was directly ahead as they walked down the slope towards the old castle of Chillon.

Down the winding path to the moat, across the drawbridge, past a yawning *concierge*, whose frown at the early arrival of his visitors changed to a smile at a double fee, and into the courtyard of the castle they passed.

Unvexed at this early hour by cicerones, Bob passed directly to the vaults beneath the castle, hewn from the rough rock on which Chillon stands, and entered a low room supported by seven pillars. Near one he paused and pointed to the circling path which surrounded it.

The place was very still, its silence broken only by the lapping waves upon the massive walls below the open window. Jack looked up inquiringly, and Bob said but a single word "Bonivard," and the friends stood reverently for an instant before the pillar to which that great martyr to liberty was chained through many weary years.

But the serious side of life never lasts very long at the age of seventeen, and the boys were hardly up the stairs and into the chamber of that Duchesse de Savoie who lived in the thirteenth century before they were skylarking through the narrow vaulted rooms.

"Chamber of the Duchess," said Jack.

"Humph, I would n't want to keep pigs here. Even pigs need sunshine and air."

They passed into the long hall of the Knights and the Chamber of Justice, noting the old wooden ceilings and queer mural decorations, and then went out into a sunny inner courtyard, where they stopped for a moment to watch two interesting scenes — a pretty girl tending her little flower bed at one side, and an antiquated stationary engine, which, with many a creak of disgusted unwillingness, was cutting up the winter's supply of wood for the castle.

"That's a queer-looking engine," said Jack. The first glance was not enough, and he bent to examine the construction more carefully. At last Jack turned to Bob.

"I wish you 'd use your French to ask these chaps," he said briefly, "if they know who made that engine or where it came from."

Bob's brief request was answered by a rapid fire of gesticulating Swiss-French *patois*. It ceased, and Bob translated: "This chap

here owns the engine. He inherited it from his uncle, who was a watchmaker in Geneva, and who built this engine himself when he came back to his old home at Territet to pass his declining years. This fellow says it always worked fine."

"Well, that watchmaker at Geneva made a valve there that I want to look into," said Jack, rising. "Ask him if he'll let me take part of his engine down and set it up again for ten francs."

Bob obeyed, and the peasant jumped at the chance. Fortunately wrench, screw-driver, and hammer were at hand, and the machine was hardly cool before Jack was investigating its construction. After a rapid inspection, he rose with knotted brows, paced out into the courtyard and back, and then put the parts together once more. As he finished his work, he spoke to Bob:

"I wish you'd pay this chap and then meet me out on the drawbridge."

Bob paid the peasant and followed on.

He found his colleague sitting on the bridge, drawing diagrams on the white fronts of two picture postal cards. Jack was so hard at work that he did not even look up at the approaching step, and did not rouse until Bob stood directly before him. Then he spoke slowly:

"I've got an idea at last. I don't know how it will work out yet. Suppose we go right back to headquarters."

The trip back was a silent one, for Jack was utterly oblivious of everything about him, and Bob respected his meditations. Nor did Jack break his silence for some time after they had taken the broken valve from the case. He sat turning the part over and over again. At last he looked up with a clear brow and nodded affirmatively as he met Bob's questioning gaze.

"If I had a first-class ordinary valve to reconstruct into our own valve," he said at last, "and a forge where I could do the work, I believe I could fix this. That old

valve that the Geneva watchmaker made half a century ago showed me the way out."

"I hope that I may be once more of service," broke in a voice from the doorway of the little shed, and the two turned to see Herr Mettelin in the doorway. "I should be very glad, Mr. Collerton," Mettelin went on, "to have you avail yourself of any part of my engine that you can use, and I know where there is a forge."

Jack sprang up. "I am so much obliged!" He paused for an instant, and then went on decisively: "I believe I will take advantage of your most generous offer, Herr Mettelin. If you don't mind, I'm going to look once more at your engine, though. I think I can make it work, but I want to look up one point."

Bob remained behind to secure the engine, and then followed to Mettelin's balloon tent. He found Jack just rising from his hands and knees before the engine, and wiping his hands on a bit of cotton waste. "That will do all

right," he said briefly. "Now, Herr Mettelin, if you can tell me where I can find the forge."

"I will go with you myself," said Mettelin. "My operator came up last night from Brigue, and I will have him take the whole engine from the frame and have it carried down. You can have your engine taken over at the same time."

"This is our biggest procession yet," remarked Bob as they brought up the rear of the group that passed down the hill towards the lake front, an hour later. "Let's see, we never had eight people all bent on our affairs at once."

The advance was rather of the processional variety. First came the Mettelin engine, borne by two stalwart porters and guarded by Mettelin's operator, then the Collerton engine, in its cases, borne by two more porters, and then Herr Mettelin, walking side by side with Bob and Jack. They proceeded a short distance down the lake front,

and then turned into a side street where a few wooden shops stood, roughly grouped. One, by its wide-mouthed chimney, showed its trade. It was the forge.

The boys peered in curiously. Three workmen in heavy sabots, with blackened faces and gray, open blouses, were swinging a piston rod, suspended by a rude derrick overhead, into a flaming furnace door which was held by a fourth man who was directing the operation. Two more artisans stood with huge sledge-hammers beside a big anvil, ready to beat the metal into shape.

At a word the big rod swung forward and into the glowing furnace. The boys, fascinated by the picture, saw the dark of the metal turn slowly gold and then change to a yellow, glistening white, that cast strange reflections on the sooty beams of the old shop. There was a quick command, and the incandescent metal, swung out once more, turned slowly to the anvil and lay there. Instantly the two brawny figures, statuesquely leaning

upon their massive sledges, sprang to life, and the whole room rang with the reverberation of their hammers.

Suddenly the resounding clamor ceased, and the men, dropping their sledges to the ground, resumed their quiet pose, the swift lifting of their broad chests the only sign of their exertions. A man whom the boys had not seen before sprang forward and peered along the bar, nodded, and the three workmen, raising the straightened rod in its chains, once more swung it into place before the furnace. Out swung the door and the leaping light vied with the stray sunlight from the dark, high windows. Once more the piston rod grew gold, once more it swung out to drop slowly into a tank of oil, which hissed and sputtered as it fell. As the hissing ceased, the man by the furnace door gave the iron one glance and then came forward to meet his visitors.

The iron worker recognized Mettelin instantly and was entirely ready to give over

his forge and workshop for the reconstruction of the valve. As he turned away to give the necessary orders to his workmen, Jack looked at his watch. "Ten o'clock," he said. "I should be through by twelve to-night."

As Bob remembered those fourteen hours afterward, they all merged into a series of confused impressions flitting across the screen of his memory as clouds pass over the face of the waters on a summer's day. He could recall half a dozen scenes repeated over and over again; Jack and Herr Mettelin in borrowed blouses, bending over bits of white-hot metal; workmen beating glowing iron to form, under the direction of one or the other; the steady rasp of files scraping and scraping against metal; a sound broken sometimes by the harsh clang of chisels against cold iron, or the duller scrunch of chisels cutting through hot iron.

Bob could see himself running to and fro with buckets of water; bringing food for hasty meals; noting dully the passage of day

into twilight, twilight into night, while the never-ceasing work went on; watching the valve tested and rejected, until at last he saw a piece of framed metal joined to their own engine, "to our own engine," he thought jubilantly; then the whole merged into one final picture, that moment of suspense in which Jack, opening once more his gasoline supply, was putting on his spark and cranking up, while an anxious, red-eyed group, with drawn, blackened faces, surrounded him.

And then how splendidly the Collerton engine responded, started off on the neutral with every part working smoothly, evenly, perfectly! The rest was a memory to Bob of a confused stumble back to headquarters, bearing the engine, of a somewhat dubious sentry who called the officer of the guard before he would let them through, of locking up the cases safely, and at last of washing up and dropping into bed.

Altogether, it was one of the most chaotic

days through which the Chairman of the Collerton Engine Company had ever passed.

The next morning Jack and Bob, to their considerable relief, found that their luggage, forwarded by Bob's command from Lucerne, had appeared, and that they were able in consequence to change their soiled clothes for fresh. The day of the trials was fair and cloudless, a slight breeze rippled the waters of the lake before their windows, and the air was pleasantly but not oppressively warm. It was an ideal day for any airship operations.

Breakfast was soon over, and the boys, with Herr Mettelin, reached headquarters early. The engine worked as well this morning as it had the night before. The same dirigible was to be used with all four of the competing engines, and each engine was to be fastened on the framework in turn, a method of procedure which required considerable time, but tended to insure an equality of conditions.

The order in which the engines were to be

tried had been determined by lot. The Mannheim Company was first, the Ayretoun second, the Maxwell-Stern third, and the Collerton fourth. If anything, the drawing favored the Mannheim Company. Each company was to provide the aviator who was to make the ascent. Jack was to make the ascent for the Collerton Company.

To prevent any possible accident at the last minute, it was decided that some one should watch the set-up engine every minute until the flight, and Bob, having strenuously insisted upon that post, was allowed to hold it. As a comparative layman, his observation of the preceding flights could do Jack but little good, while the trained eyes of Herr Mettelin might serve the Collerton aëronaut well.

The conditions of each trial were briefly these: each operator was to ascend from the stage at Territet, run down the north bank of Lake Lemman, past Lausanne, to a stake boat placed off Morges, — approxi-

mately twenty miles. At Morges he was to turn south and cross the river to a stake boat off Evian, eight miles away on the southern bank, then return diagonally across the lake and around a stake boat to Territet, making a total distance of fifty English miles. Allowing certain fixed handicaps, such as allowance for winds, *et cetera*, the engine which covered the distance in the shortest time without accident was to win.

As Jack approached the group he recognized the stout form of Schwartz and the lean frame of Kunsch. For an instant he held back, not anxious for the meeting; but a moment later he remembered that though he had seen them, they had never seen him; so he pushed on.

The Mannheim aviator was a slim young man whom Jack had never seen. He seemed to know his business thoroughly, however, and in a very brief space had his engine adjusted and was ready to start.

Easily and quickly the airship, bearing the

Mannheim engine, took to the air, rose a hundred feet, and started straight down the lake.

"That's a good engine, Herr Mettelin," said Jack, as they watched the dirigible sweep away.

"Excellent," answered the aëronaut, glancing at the stop-watch in his hand, "but I think the Collerton can do better."

Jack watched the little assembly curiously as they stood waiting for the returning airship. Sir Gregory, in his spotless white flannels, stood chatting with his two associate judges, while the other competitors and their respective following talked among themselves. A number came to speak to Mettelin, and Jack found a most courteous welcome.

They were talking with an English aëronaut who had come over expressly to see the trials, when a cry went up: "Here she comes!" and Jack raised his glasses, to see the big bird making straight for home. Easily and gracefully the boat came down

without a slip amidst a most generous round of applause. The Mannheim Company had done excellently, and Jack felt none too sure in his heart of hearts that he could beat them. The general opinion of the aëronauts around seemed to be that no engine could be produced which would do better.

Neither the engine of the Ayretoun, nor that of the Maxwell-Stern Company came near to equalling the record made by the Mannheims. The first stopped short before it had gone a mile, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that the airship was brought back to the landing stage, while the aviator of the second took nearly an hour more to round the course than the Mannheim aëronaut had required. The whole morning had passed, and afternoon was well on before the three trials were ended, and the time came for the Collerton engine to take its chances.

As Jack sat at his place, with the swaying, gas-filled bag above him, waiting for the

word to go, he felt a spirit of calm confidence settle over him. Then came the sharp query: "Ready?"

"Yes."

"Go."

The lad smiled cheerfully, as from the shouts that heralded his rise, two familiar voices could be distinguished: "Go it, old boy!" "Good fortune, Mr. Collerton!" But he never moved his head. His chance, the chance of his life, was ahead of him, and he was determined to avail himself of it to the utmost.

Ascending slowly at first, he soon passed from low speed to high. As he flew on, he blessed the two long trips with Mettelin, for his observation of the tactics of that master of his trade did him good service now. Straight up the coast he sped, by smiling rivers, vineyard-covered hills and pleasant shore resorts, past Lausanne and up to Morges, where he made his sharp turn and started across the lake. Clearly and sweetly

the engine, and the airship which it controlled, responded to his slightest touch. Well did the cool, fresh breeze serve, and Jack knew by the time he had left Evian that he must be making record time.

He kept from looking at his watch, however. He was going to make the airship do its best, anyway, no matter what the time, and he could do no better if he knew. As he rounded the stake boat, he could hear shouts of applause from below, and it was with a confident heart that he headed directly for the landing stage at Territet. Swifter and swifter grew the motion now, as Jack threw in the utmost of his power, and the craft responded nobly. The last stretch was by far the swiftest of all, and it was but an affair of minutes before the landing stage was before him. As he came up to it, he checked his speed with easy movements and alighted.

The long strain of the struggle had been no easy thing to endure. Despite his cool

nerve, Jack felt a sudden reaction as he stepped to the ground from his place on the airship; and it was with a feeling of relief beyond anything he had ever known that he heard Herr Mettelin's whispered word: "I am sure that you have won," and felt Bob's joyous grip of the hand.

The judges were shutting their note-books now, and were starting to turn away. Jack looked around. None of the Mannheim Company were in sight.

"When are they going to announce the winner?" he asked anxiously.

"To-night at eight o'clock," replied Herr Mettelin. "A statement to that effect was made while you were off on your flight. They need a couple of hours to figure the allowances and make the necessary corrections."

As Jack and Bob passed through the office of the hotel, a porter hastened towards them with a telegram. Jack, with deep emotion, saw that it was a cable message.

Leave for Liverpool Saturday. Meet me Twomell's, London.

COLLERTON.

"Hooray!" cried Bob. "I am so glad!" Yet despite the news from his father, the hours that passed before eight that night were among the most trying of Jack's life. Although he knew he had apparently made by far the best time, yet he feared some possible flaw in his calculations. He could not be sure, and the minutes passed on leaden wings. It was with a sense of deep relief that he saw Herr Mettelin glance at his watch at the end of dinner, and heard him give the signal for departure.

As they strolled, Herr Mettelin was deep in the never-failing question of the comparative merits of the various types of airships heavier than air, of helicopters or vertical screw machines, of ornithopters, which are intended to fly like a bird with beating wings, and of aëroplanes, but the boys could hardly reply coherently. The strain of

waiting was proving hard, especially the strain of the last minutes.

As they entered the big room where Jack had made his entry of the engine, they found the gathering already assembled, and a brilliant company in evening dress under the radiant lights. Sir Gregory Hawes and his two associates stood before the mantel, a little apart, and the half hundred men who were present were grouped near him. Just at one side Jack saw Kunsch and Schwartz, who stood talking together with no very amiable expression upon their scowling faces.

Sir Gregory looked up as the party of three entered the room, and motioned to the secretary, who called for silence. In an instant every sound within the room ceased. Sir Gregory stepped forward.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "I beg to announce that the Collerton Engine Company has won the competition."

A burst of applause greeted his words, a sound which Sir Gregory stilled with a wave

of his hand. He continued: "Will Mr. Robert Burne, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Collerton Engine Company, kindly step forward?"

Like a man in a dream, Bob walked out before the assembly and up to Sir Gregory, who, with a smile, handed over a sealed paper.

"There is the formal notification of the award," he said. "The actual transfer of the rights to the Government can be made any time during the next two weeks in London at the War Office. On the signing over of the rights, you will receive a warrant for twenty-five thousand pounds."

Bob took the paper, bowed, and turned away, to meet a congratulating group, who pressed forward with outstretched hands; but the moment of all came when he clasped hands with his friend.

As the felicitations were crowding on the two boys from every side, two figures, one lean and one fat, were quietly and unosten-

tatiously making their way towards the door. As he went forward, Bob had seen the horror-stricken opening of Mr. Kunsch's lean jaws, as he recognized his former acquaintance. Now, catching Jack by the arm, Bob, excusing themselves for a moment from the throng, moved quietly after and stepped before the Mannheim representatives, as they were half-way down the empty corridor.

"Jack," said Bob solemnly, as they stepped before the two Germans, "I want you to know my old friend, Mr. Kunsch. Mr. Kunsch has been most kind to us. If you remember, I saw Mr. Kunsch first at Henley, where he learned that your cases had been stolen, and most philanthropically took it upon himself to go to the Continent with Mr. Schwartz in search of them. He left by the night train for Paris. And you'll remember we were lucky enough to get some fine phonographic records of his conversation on the train with Mr. Schwartz. Those

records would be invaluable evidence if we wanted to use them.

“His automobile broke down, you know, just outside Lucerne, and he was good enough to let us get the cases ourselves from Heinrich Erheim; but wishin’ to speak to you personally, some of his people devised that delightful little surprise of havin’ you arrested at Brigue. Now the reason I’m tellin’ you all these good deeds of the Mannheim Company is that I feel they’ve been too good to us. They’ve done all they ought to do, and I felt we might tell Mr. Kunsch that we recognized it, and we felt that they *must* stop.”

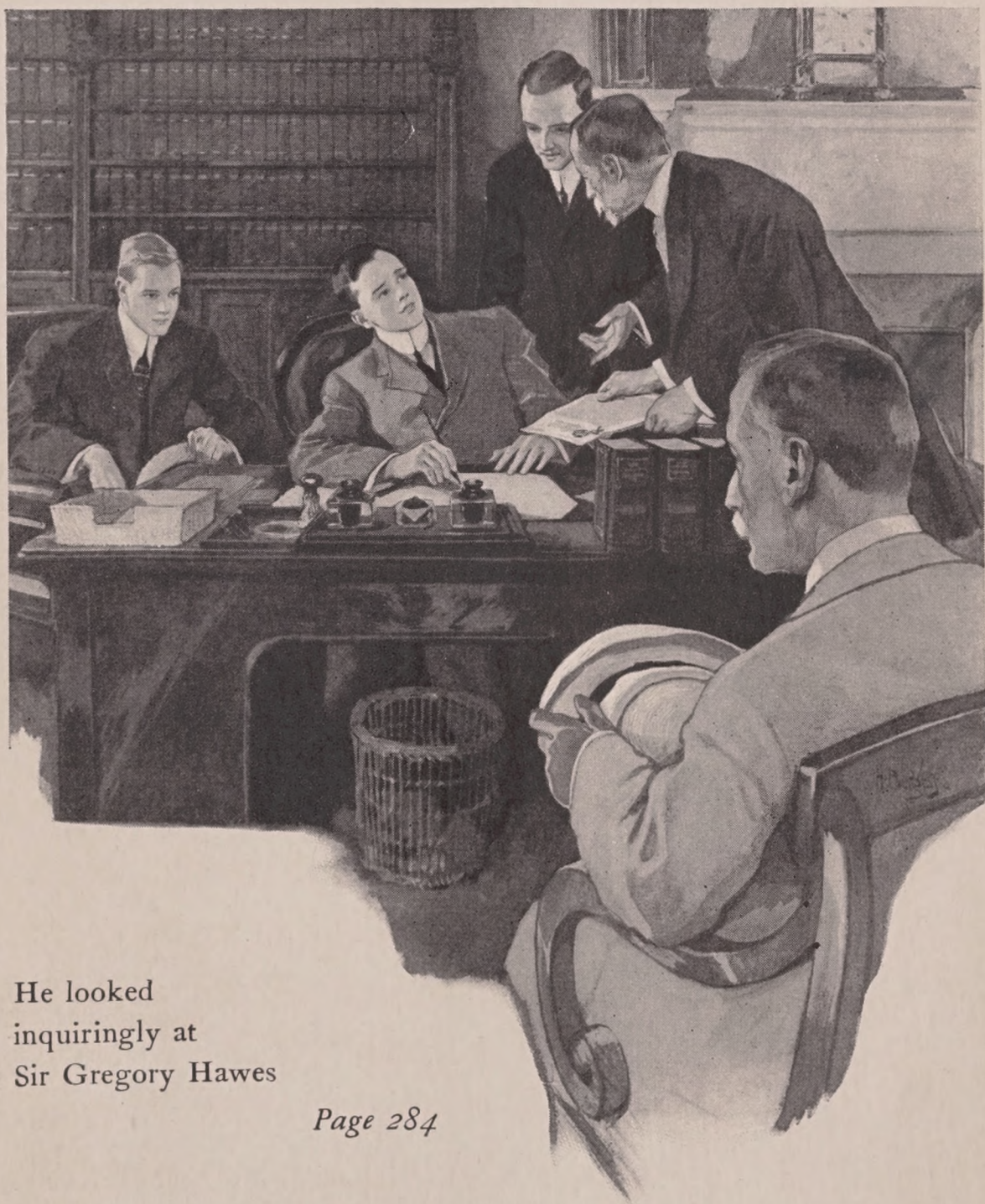
The two men hardened, as they stood at bay. As Bob went on, they had started once or twice to interrupt blusteringly, but the weight of evidence, the piling of Ossa on Pelion, was more than flesh and blood could stand. Kunsch stood gnawing his mustache nervously, while Schwartz wound his heavy watch-chain around his finger till it sank

deeply into the fat flesh. Before either could speak, Jack broke in:

"Yes, you 're quite right, Bob," he said. "I think you 've made it very clear."

"I 'm glad you think so," said Bob. "And now, gentlemen, one last word. We have n't brought the law into this at all as yet, but if any necessity for calling in its aid should arise —" . He paused significantly. Without a word of reply, the Germans pushed by and departed, and the Mannheim Company troubled the Collerton Engine Company no more.

Two days later, in a quiet room in the War Office, Bob straightened up from affixing a last signature on a formal sheet spread out on a big desk. He looked inquiringly at Sir Gregory Hawes and then at Mr. Twomell. Both nodded. "That 's all," said Twomell, and Sir Gregory, opening a leather case, took out a single crinkly oblong of paper and handed it over. It was the warrant for twenty-five thousand pounds. Bob turned with a smile.



He looked
inquiringly at
Sir Gregory Hawes

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"This goes to the treasurer," he said, and he handed it to Jack. It was made out to the Collerton Engine Company.

"I sha'n't keep it long," said Jack, and he stepped to the desk, reversed the warrant, and endorsed it:

Pay to the order of Philip Collerton,
Collerton Engine Co.

JOHN COLLERTON, *Treas.*

He turned and handed the paper to his father.

One hot summer day a year later, when Jack Collerton was back in the United States, a lad, David Morrell by name, appeared at the machine shops where Jack was working. He came on business concerning a storage battery which he had invented and with which he had passed through some strange adventures. The story of those adventures will be told in the next book of the "Young Captains of Industry" series, — "Dave Morrell's Battery."

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